

Sewanee Review

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EDITED BY

WILLIAM S. KNICKERBOCKER

October-December, 1933

THE EMILY DICKINSON CONTROVERSY.. *Frederick J. Pohl*

CANADIAN LITERATURE TO-DAY *E. K. Brown*

GERTRUDE STEIN..... *William S. Knickerbocker*

RELIGIOUS MOODS IN MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

B. K. Meland

LITERARY SHIBBOLETHS *George Milton Jones*

POEMS by Louise Crenshaw Ray and Herbert Edward
Microw.

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Sewanee Review

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OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1933

- Literary Shibboleths George Milton Janes Page 385

Addiction to current formulae for the evaluation of contemporary literature is increasingly becoming an obsession with critics and readers in general. The author of this essay, who is Professor of Economics at Kenyon College (Gambier, Ohio), briefly examines this fallacious tendency and arrives at interesting conclusions.

- Mind-Driven (sonnet) Louise Crenshaw Ray 395

Miss Ray is a well-known poet of Alabama.

- Romanticism Reconsidered Richard E. Jones 396

According to the now-expired BOOKMAN (New York), in its "Chronicle and Comment" of July, 1930, the Sewanee Review was credited with being the first periodical to attack "Humanism as a party movement". The sub-title of Mr. Jones' essay, here printed, relates his discussion to the revaluation of romantic poetry compelled by the Humanist critics: "Humanism and Romantic Poetry". The recent death of Dr. Irving Babbitt, the leader of the Humanists, is the immediate occasion for returning to the contribution of Humanism to American criticism. "Romanticism Reconsidered" is written by Professor Richard E. Jones, of the Department of English, Washington University, Saint Louis, Missouri.

- Longfellow Guedallies with Infidelity (poem) ... A. K. D., Jr. 418

- The Passion and Soul of Petrarch Sam H. Steward 419

This portrait of Petrarch, the first of a series of studies of great European humanists, illuminates the motivating ideals of the modern concept of culture. The author is a member of the faculty of the Ohio State University at Columbus, Ohio.

- The Immediate Present in Canadian Literature ... E. K. Brown 430

In this critical survey of the present state of Canadian letters, the author (Professor of English in the University of Toronto and an editor of a Canadian literary review) exhibits the causes for much of its sterility and calls attention to some significant Canadian writers and suggestively discusses their work.

- Kinsmen of the Wild Bernard E. Meland 443

Professor in the Religious Education Department of Central College (Fayette, Missouri), Mr. Meland discusses in this article the religious moods in Modern American poetry.

His Own Boswell	William S. Knickerbocker	Page 454
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Oliver Wendell Holmes was not persuaded that his poetry would endure the pressures of changing styles and taste in poetry. Experimentally, the author of this essay re-examines Holmes' poetry with an eye on the contemporary phase of the cycle of literary taste and finds several qualities which make Holmes' verse eminently re-readable to-day.

The Emily Dickinson Controversy	Frederick J. Pohl	467
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Co-incidentally with the production on Broadway of the drama concerning the mystery of Emily Dickinson's lover, "Brittle Heaven", this survey of the various theories as to who he was is published. It was written by one of the authors of "Brittle Heaven" and will interest all who care for Emily Dickinson's poetry or are interested in her personality.

William Porcher DuBose	Moultrie Guerry	483
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Continuing his series of "Makers of Sewanee", the Chaplain of the University of the South presents this sympathetic portrait of one of the greatest theologians America has produced. In a day like this when rigorous thinking in religious matters vies with equally rigorous thinking in economics among younger critics and readers the vigor of DuBose as a catholic thinker should be called to their attention.

Escape (poem)	Herbert Edward Mierow	494
---------------------	-----------------------	-----

The author is Professor of Classics at Colorado College.

BOOK REVIEWS:

1. Ruskin's Aesthetic	Charles Frederick Harrold	495
2. Stunning Stein	W. S. Knickerbocker	498
3. Toward a New Renaissance	Maurice Halperin	499
4. Sidney Lanier	George E. DeMille	503
5. Elephantiasis	Edward Niles Hooker	505
6. Illusion	James D. Hart	507
7. A Victorian Medley	Frances W. Knickerbocker	509
8. Flaming Arrow	Carroll Lane Fenton	511

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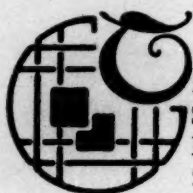
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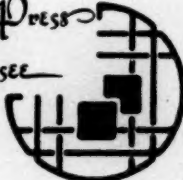
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by George Milton Janes

LITERARY SHIBBOLETHS

AN ECONOMIST LOOKS AT LITERATURE

ACCORDING to the ancient story the word "Shibboleth" was used by the Gileadites to distinguish the fugitive Ephraimites at the Jordan fords. The Ephraimites, not being able to pronounce *sh*, called the word "sibboleth". The word was used not only as a test or criterion, but also as a party cry or slogan as we would say to-day.

One generation emphasizes one idea, the next generation, another idea. Ideas change. Styles in dress, speech, manners, and even literature come and go. Change is the order of life. Man, however, in the flux of things desires a stable and immovable rock on which to build his thought and life. So, in spite of evidences to the contrary, he is ever seeking an all-embracing theory or dogma, some shibboleth he can use as an acid test, a rallying cry or slogan.

Ideologies, which are visionary theories, idle speculations, and Utopias or social romances, are extreme examples of this propensity of the human mind. Napoleon contemptuously termed such dreamers Ideologists and punctured their theories with a whiff of grape shot. Like pagans with their idols, man, however, continues to create ideologies in his own image.

On a higher intellectual level, perhaps, than ideologies, are various theories and slogans which have their genesis in the events of the times in which they arise or are conditioned by man's intellectual, political, and economic advancement. The theories or words become Shibboleths and mark the difference between the sheep and the goats. The English Revolution of 1688, for example, was defended on the ground of the sovereignty of the people expressed through Parliament. The American Revolution, likewise, had the Declaration of Independence in which it is stated:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among them are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." The French Revolution had inscribed on its banner the magic words: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The American Civil War was known at first as the War of the Rebellion but in recent years it has become the War between the States, or, for the South at least, the War for Southern Independence, while the World War we are told was waged to make the world safe for democracy.

The idea of natural rights has had an interesting history but to-day the doctrine has been consigned to the ash heap. Men are not created free and equal, for society lays its restraining hand on every individual, and men differ from one another physically, intellectually, and morally; they always have differed and always will differ. Political equality in the universal possession of the franchise has not produced the anticipated results, so, to-day, economic equality through communism and socialism is being proclaimed.

Literary shibboleths also abound. Literary fashions come and go. The literature of one age is marked by the classical spirit of order, form, and restraint; that of another age by romanticism; idealism gives place to realism and to the naturalism of Zola, Maupassant, and their followers; humanism appears as a protest in the interest of human values. A recent development has been the interpretation of literature on the basis of economics and the dialectical materialism of Marx. The literature of the proletariat, we are told, is to rule the future.

The dialectic of Marx, of course, is a familiar doctrine. Marx tells us that man's ideas and institutions are determined for him by the methods of production and exchange by which he gets his living. An extreme statement of this materialism is that man is what he is, because of what he eats. Marx borrowed from Hegel the theory of the dialectic and giving it a materialistic twist said that all history is the result of economic forces working out in the affirmation of an idea, then by the negation of the idea, and this followed by a synthesis. Concretely, Marx divided mankind into three classes—the capitalists, the middle class or bourgeoisie, and the proletariat or working classes. The bourgeoisie or most of

them would sink into the proletariat, with a few finding a place among the capitalists, thus leaving the capitalists arrayed against the proletariat, affirmation against negation, and by the inherent nature of things, by increasing misery and class struggle, and by class war, the domination of the proletariat would result in socialism—a synthesis. Materialistic forces are thus the real rulers of man's destiny and ideas. The economic interpretation of ideas and institutions may be held, of course, in a modified form, as only one force without denying other influences. Even so, the dominant influence is usually attributed to economic forces.

Thus in recent years, literature has had its shibboleths, idols, and blessed words. Prominent among these has been the economic interpretation of literature, especially American literature. Many teachers of English have relegated literature to a small vestibule in the temple of learning and have enlarged the auditorium by annexing economics as preached by the man in the street which by little effort of the imagination may be termed side-walk economics. Thus these terms are rife: economic determinism, dialectic materialism, economic realism, economic interpretation of literature, the literature of the proletariat, and the liberation of American literature.

An interesting illustration of a literary shibboleth is furnished by *Main Currents in American Thought* by Vernon Louis Parrington, formerly professor of English at the University of Washington. This work is comprised in three volumes, the first two of which brought Professor Parrington the Pulitzer Prize for History in 1928. These two volumes entitled *The Colonial Mind* and *The Romantic Revolution in America* cover the period from colonial days down to the Civil War. The third volume published since the author's lamented and premature death covers *The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America* and brings the narrative down to 1920. This last volume is made up of some completed material together with unfinished notes and comments and naturally is not so finished a product as the other two volumes.

In this monumental work of Parrington the growth of American literature in its various aspects is regarded as the product of philosophical, social, and economic forces shaping the environment and influencing the work of American writers. The influence of economic forces on literature is strongly emphasized. An obvious

indebtedness to the principles laid down by Taine in his history of English literature to the effect that the literature of a people is the inevitable outgrowth of their racial peculiarities, environment, and epoch may be noted, but a more important influence, perhaps, was that of Charles Beard and other economic historians who stress the influence of economic forces.

Many pages of the work are devoted to an exposition of various political philosophies, but it is difficult to see how sectional political theories had much influence on American literature. Granting the influence of economic forces on political philosophy it is still difficult to account for literature as being determined by either political or economic determinism. Parrington frankly admits that the writings of Poe had no relation to the contemporary scene but he does not explain why Whitman in spite of much and extreme laudation is still caviare to the general. The chapters on Washington Irving, Herman Melville, John P. Kennedy, and Hawthorne are more convincing than others because of the absence of extreme economic and political emphasis. Likewise the real value of the writings of Emerson and Whittier is traced to the moral idealism they express. Other writers are discussed and judged with sympathetic insight from a broad point of view. Parrington is at his best when he forgets his economic and literary shibboleths. The truth of the matter is that literature and creative thought exist under all sorts of economic, political, and social conditions and theories with the possible exception of Communism as it exists in Russia to-day.

It should also be pointed out that Parrington's work while brilliant lacks historical perspective. One example among numerous others may be noted. The Mathers and the doings of the Mather clan are very controversial subjects, but Parrington's censures of them seem greatly prejudiced. The monumental biography of *Increase Mather* by Professor Murdoch is waived aside as of little value. Increase Mather and Cotton Mather are both harshly condemned for their part in the witchcraft craze at Salem. Concerning Increase it may be said that the craze had begun when he returned from England where he had represented the colony, and that he claimed that "spectral evidence" is not enough to convict a witch. "Most scholars", Professor Murdoch tells us, "have modified the criticisms leveled at Increase Mather's door and made

Cotton Mather the villain of the piece". Professor Parrington, however, aims his arrows with but little discrimination at both the Mathers. Now belief in witchcraft was almost universal in both America and Europe at that time. In the seventeenth century some three hundred persons in England, three thousand in Scotland, and numbers in other countries suffered death as a penalty for witchcraft. In the light of such a bloody contemporary record, the wonder about the Salem craze is that it ended as soon as it did and involved relatively few (about twenty) victims. However revolting the incident may be to modern minds, it can be fully understood only by a knowledge of the standards of that day. It is futile to condemn a man living in the seventeenth century for not having the ideas of the twentieth century. Moreover, it may be noted, that belief in evil spirits, the evil eye, and even in witches has not entirely faded out of the civilized world even to-day. Parrington's judgment of the Mathers is but one example of his reading back present ideas into old situations. Historical perspective should be kept in mind even in a history of thought.

Concerning Parrington and his interpretation of American literature, Bernard Fay in a recent clever magazine article says rather unconvincingly that, although Parrington always lived in America, he was essentially an Englishman and so incapable of thinking for himself. Fay claims that English radicalism and especially the ideas of Lecky dominate Parrington's three volumes on American thought "which for that reason are a monument of British incomprehension". This is all interesting, if true; it is at least an example of Gallic wit, but Fay is on safer ground when he implies that the economic factor alone does not entirely account even for Franklin, to say nothing of other writers. Parrington was indeed a liberal; he belonged to the right-wing of radical interpreters of American literature and wrote from that angle. The real criticism of his work is that he overstressed the economic factor; that instead of being an interpretation of American literature, the work is largely an exposition of American political philosophy, and that many of the writers considered at length may have had considerable political influence but much of their work has little literary value.

The Liberation of American Literature by V. F. Calverton, recently published, is an extreme example of the application of the

theory of economic determinism and of dialectic materialism to the interpretation of literature. The book has been hailed by Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes in these words: "By far the most substantial and illuminating left-wing interpretation of the development of American literature and literary ideas. As the radical slant on American literature it deserves to rank with Parrington's writings from the liberal angle."

Imagine the first row around and then go ahead were the old lady's directions for knitting a stocking; it seems to be the method followed by Mr. Calverton in writing this book, which is a splendid example of the vitiating effect of starting with a thesis and then interpreting the facts to fit the thesis. The Marxian approach is used and from the beginning much is said concerning the struggles of various classes such as the aristocratic, upper bourgeois, petty bourgeois, and the proletariat, and the effect of these struggles on literature. The familiar dialectic materialism of Marx is the pervading influence.

Petty bourgeois psychology, we are told, has had a deteriorating effect on American literature from the beginning. The upper bourgeois class, on the contrary, has been freer in its outlook. The only salvation that is possible, however, must be furnished by the proletariat—a low-brow literature is the way of escape. Moreover, says Mr. Calverton: "Proletarian writers believe that their literature can serve a great purpose only when it contributes, first, toward the destruction of present-day society, and, second, toward the creation of a new society which will embody, like Soviet Russia to-day, a social, instead of an individualistic, ideal".

The same idea is emphasized by A. Troitski in the *Moscow Daily News* for December 30, 1932: "We call upon Soviet writers to create a literature that will induce youth to work, fight, and live as Bolsheviks. Proletarian realism is the main type of our literature". Mr. Calverton talks about the liberation of American literature, but the truth of the matter is that literature could not flourish under a regime of collectivism, for it would inevitably be subjected to political purposes. Proletariat ideology is a poor shibboleth.

The tendency to elaborate a theory on a small basis of facts is found in *Sketches in Criticism*, a recently published work by Van Wyck Brooks. In an interesting essay on "The Tradition of Rootlessness", Mr. Brooks lays down the thesis that Americans from

the beginnings of our settlements have never loved the soil from which they got their living, and have always ceased to be farmers as soon as favorable opportunities were presented. This constant forsaking of the soil accounts for much of American restlessness. One reason given is "the character of the original settlers and the tradition they established for their descendants, in the fact that they were not indeed peasants but townspeople and artisans, in large measure, of a bookish, genteel tendency, and ill-adapted to elemental circumstances".

To give point to this intuition, as he calls it, Mr. Brooks calls attention to a recent magazine article, "Whom the Land Loves", by Miss Mary Alden Hopkins. In this article Miss Hopkins describes the rejuvenation of a certain Connecticut countryside: A colony of Slavs has settled there, and under their hands, as she puts it, the tired, disconsolate soil is recovering its health. These new colonists do not fight the land—such is her theory—they love it; whereas with the old New Englanders, it was just the other way. "The Puritan forefarmers lived in perpetual conflicts with nature. They 'wrested a living from the soil' and were never reconciled to being farmers. Each farmhouse had its shelf of books—and they were not on agriculture". Now European peasants have taken up the abandoned farms; the land likes the change and a new era will result. A real culture may ensue "because these people and their descendants have loved the soil, because in them humanity and the soil have successfully met one another". Yes, perhaps, but the children of these peasants will have to be kept out of the American public schools, otherwise they too may have a shelf of books not about agriculture, and some of them may not remain farmers.

The reason given for abandoned New England farms illustrates a curious fallacy. In Europe the artist and poet make much of the fact that all the land is highly cultivated, that not a bit goes to waste. But, in reality, why is this so? Because land is dear and men are cheap. Intensive farming flourishes under those conditions. Under American conditions, however, for the most part the opposite conditions prevail. Cheap land and high wages mean extensive farming, the use of more land, a less return per acre, but with larger aggregate return over expenses. The American condition has been cheap land and dear men.

The Puritan farmers usually had large families, for under simple agricultural conditions children were an asset, and with their help a man could obtain a comfortable living from his acres. The New England farms turned out leaders like John Adams, the first of the Adams clan to forsake the farm and to get a college education; the father of Daniel Webster was also a farmer. Should John Adams and Daniel Webster have remained on the farm? The same question might be asked concerning dozens of New England leaders.

The opening of more fertile land in the West reduced the value of New England farms more than fifty percent in some cases and wiped out at one stroke the investment of two hundred years of back-breaking labor. No wonder migration ensued.

Lack of a love for the soil as an explanation of American restlessness hardly bears the test of examination. This restlessness and lack of traditional culture are not to be explained by so simple a factor, for many forces have brought the condition about. America is a young country, still in its infancy, the oldest settlements going back only about three hundred years, and as one writer has said, this is "merely a morning-hour of sunrise compared to the length of continuous life and unbroken tradition among European peoples". Our immigrants have come in waves of various nationalities and one tradition has been overcome by another; America is still a melting-pot, not only of various races but also of various ideas. The frontier and its influence has persisted through most of our history and has modified the traditions of the older portions of the country and prevented the adopting of a common tradition. The Civil War is not far in the past and we should remember that it took four years of war to hammer us into a nation and give us a political unity. In a word, tradition and culture are products of time and America is still young.

Moreover, the expectation that from these peasant farmers who love the soil will arise in time a new culture which will redeem America from its sordid industrialism, is nothing more than a pleasant dream. Hawthorne tells us in *The Blithedale Romance*, the result of his experiences at Brook Farm: "The peril of our new way of life was not lest we should fail in becoming practical agriculturists, but that we should probably cease to be anything else". The heavy manual labor to which he and his companions so constantly devoted their lives was never etherealized into

thought. "Our thoughts," he continues, "on the contrary, were fast becoming cloddish. Our labor symbolized nothing, and left us mentally sluggish in the dusk of the evening. Intellectual activity is incompatible with any large amount of bodily exercise. The yeoman and the scholar—the yeoman and the man of finest moral culture, though not the man of sturdiest sense and integrity—are two distinct individuals, and can never be melted or welded into one substance".

Mr. Brooks has a real shibboleth in his idea that repression is an explanation of the tragedy of American cultural development, and that frustration has resulted because of the conflict between prudence and the creative spirit. For instance, the creative activities of Mark Twain and Henry James were thwarted by American civilization but in opposing fashion. Mark Twain stayed at home and surrendered to the tastes of his time. Henry James fled to Europe and the uprooting withered and wasted his genius. As to Mark Twain the evidence that he lived a frustrated or repressed life is not very convincing. Bernard De Voto in his recent biography of Twain tells us that the humorist was a genuine product of America in its broadest sense and laughs this idea of repression out of court. Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer came directly from the soil. To talk of a man who buckled on his armor after being involved in bankruptcy by no fault of his own in the failure of his publisher, and went to work and paid every dollar of the indebtedness, as a repressed or frustrated being is nonsense. The Boston Brahmins, members of a mutual admiration society, with whom one of Twain's humorous speeches fell as flat as a pancake, may have caused him chagrin for a while but no permanent repression. Twain was typical of America, bone of its bone, flesh of its flesh in both his achievements and his failures. This typical Americanism is illustrated in his speech to members of the Grand Army of the Republic when he ended his eulogy of General Grant by saying: "Remember, gentlemen, that he was once a baby and that his sole problem as he lay in his cradle was to get his big toe into his mouth, and, if the child is but the father of the man, there are mighty few who will doubt that he succeeded". The house, we are told, came down with a bang.

Further illustrations might be given of other shibboleths such as romanticism, realism, naturalism, vorticism, primitivism, impres-

sionism, and humanism, but each of these signifies but an incomplete aspect of life, only a segment of reality. Like a chameleon, life and literature assume many hues. The economic interpretation of literature as we have seen is based on the theory that human conduct is determined by economic motives alone. Such an interpretation is inadequate. The Puritans migrating to New England were animated by a desire to worship God according to their own ideas and not those of Laud, and probably by political and economic motives as well. The men of Gloucester said plainly that they came to fish. No one denies the influence of the economic motive but there is more in heaven and earth than is dreamt of in that shibboleth or in any other single one. As the prophet said: "For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself in it; and the covering narrower than he can wrap himself in it".

Again, it is all very well to hold up the ideals of the middle-class as petty bourgeois ideology and to ridicule the supposed restrictions which these ideals impose on literature. The truth of the matter is that the middle-classes are the bulwark of society and instead of dying out are growing in numbers. The thesis that there is an ever-growing minority of big capitalists on top and an ever-growing proletarian multitude at the bottom is shown to be false by statistical evidence. While the capitalists have done much with their money to encourage art in all its forms, it is nevertheless true that the greatest contributions to literature, music, and the other arts have come neither from the capitalists nor from the proletarian multitudes.

The literary shibboleths in vogue during the last decade have been destructive and one can hazard a guess that a literary output which at its best results only in a deep feeling of futility and frustration, and at its worst is filled with dirt and even obscenity, must be ephemeral and of little permanent worth. There seems to be a changing attitude in the rising generation. An article on the college student and his ideals, quoting an outstanding senior at Harvard, editor of one of the under-graduate publications, gives this bit of evidence: "Dreiser, Mencken, Sinclair Lewis, Hemingway, and the others of that school we have put aside as too destructive. We want to build up".

Likewise in a recent issue of the *Saturday Review of Literature* there is a letter which seems to show that the youthful moralist is

appearing and that the pendulum is swinging away from realism, naturalism, and the Dead Sea fruit of recent novelists. Says one presumably youthful person: "We want some gifted writer who believes in goodness, beauty, love, humor, and intelligence; we want him to put these qualities and characteristics into a novel uncontaminated by biology or gooey sentiments. And we want him to do it now".

by Louise Crenshaw Ray

MIND-DRIVEN

Now that the stallion heart submits, controlled
By a flinty mind as resolute and gray
As lichened boulders, lest desire betray
The reason's citadel, his eyes are cold,
His gait the plodding of the wary old.
No longer does he test his strength and lay
Close-flattened ears against the wind, or neigh
Defiance, trampling down the canyon's gold.

Although existence is a calmer thing,
With more of peace and less of dangerous
Allure, the heart, contented in a fashion,
At times is waked by sudden clattering
Of unsubmissive hoofs; and taunted thus,
Strives to recall the savage spur of passion.

by Richard E. Jones

ROMANTICISM RECONSIDERED

HUMANISM AND ROMANTIC POETRY

IN the closing years of the last century, the late Irving Babbitt of Harvard University first expressed in dim outline views that were destined to be expanded and modified for the next thirty-five years. In the first two decades of this century, Paul Elmer More, both as editor of the *Nation* and other periodicals, and as author of a series of distinguished volumes entitled *Shelburne Essays*, expressed and developed a philosophical literary criticism fundamentally based upon the same principles as those of Professor Babbitt. A few other writers joined forces with these two, the most conspicuous of whom was the late Stuart P. Sherman, who, however, was later to desert the cause. But, in general, Mr. Babbitt and Mr. More have been almost entirely responsible for keeping the idea alive, though for a long time the literary public paid scant attention to them. In 1919 Babbitt published the most complete expression of his interpretation of the philosophy in a volume called *Rousseau and Romanticism*, which, owing to its severe strictures on the romantic poets and to his attributing most of the evils of the present day to Rousseau, caused a flurry of opposition that soon died away as the lawless and enthusiastic flouters of tradition proceeded to monopolize the third decade of the century. But the ferment was at work in the serious readers of More's books, and especially in those who as students of Professor Babbitt had heard humanism expounded as from a pulpit. About four years ago the movement suddenly began to take form and gather momentum, a momentum which at the present time is constantly being accelerated, even though there is a temporary lull in its public expression. In fact, in 1929, humanism had become such a live topic of discussion that an open debate was staged at Carnegie Hall, New York City, between Mr. Canby of the *Saturday Re-*

view of Literature and Mr. Carl Van Doren on the one side and Mr. Babbitt on the other. Then books and articles, pro and con, began to appear on all sides. The *Forum* lent its august pages to several humanistic articles, and the *Bookman* capitulated outright. The movement even began to have repercussions abroad. In England two periodicals took on a humanistic tinge, and individual converts, especially our own T. S. Eliot, began to appear. In France, which had for some time enjoyed a humanistic movement of its own, a weighty history of the American movement was written and received with acclaim. In short, we may say that humanism became "copy" for the newspapers.

In this latter respect, perhaps the most significant event was the enthusiastic embracing of the humanistic creed by Seward Collins, editor of the *Bookman*. Versed in all the devices of the propagandist and possessed of a vigorous, almost headlong style, and of a picturesque vocabulary, he is able to meet the moderns on their own ground, and to translate into Menckonian terms the allegiances and antagonisms of the new philosophy. Mr. More, in his seclusion, could through his erudite writings reach only the dignified minds of the country. Mr. Babbitt, while reaching a somewhat wider public through his books, found his battlefield largely in the rather restricted area of the class room, but Collins carried the warfare into the domain and purlieu of the newspaper and the popular periodical, which for ten years had been monopolized by the forces of modernity and chaos. With a wit and humor which vacillate between dignity and vulgarity, with a courage that sometimes smacks of audacity, if not impudence, and with a language more picturesque than discriminating, he has brought ideas which had seemed to the irreverent enemy to be safely embalmed in the remote and philosophical discussions of learned books into the common mart of public opinion arrayed in the language which the modernists both understand and, shall we say, fear. Apparently they sense the danger of being crowded from the front page, and of losing the only asset of a superficially based philosophy, namely publicity. This sudden and unexpected turn in the course of things may ultimately be of little significance, for in the giddy whirl of modern life, generally characterized by transient ideas to which an undisciplined and unthoughtful public pay brief allegiance, one can hardly look for constant loyalty. What is, however,

a more impressive omen is found in a collection of essays by fifteen different authors, including the founders of the movement, which appeared four years ago, edited by Norman Foerster of the University of Iowa under the title of *Humanism and America*. This volume reveals in how many different and diverse places humanistic ideas have taken root, and how these principles are being applied to all fields of human thought. It also prompts interesting conjectures concerning the future of literary criticism, academic curricula, and pedagogical standards. The literary criticism of the humanists is so solidly based upon past learning, oriental as well as occidental, that if it should be widely accepted, the day of the unlearned and purely journalistic critic is past, for either to support or attack humanism effectively requires some learning and no little mental discipline. Needless to say, a literary criticism, whether humanistic or not, which postulates these two qualifications in a critic is a consummation devoutly to be wished, even though hardly to be expected, and we can bid farewell with no sorrowful heart to the critic who has confidently regaled us with pop judgments and effervescent impressions. One phenomenon, indeed, which has appeared within the last fifteen years, and which should pave the way for a finer criticism, is the large number of academically trained men who have turned from the narrower scholarship characteristic of university professors to the wider field of literary values and principles.

Even the curricula of our schools and universities, the apple of pedagogical discord hurled in our midst by the presiding deity of democracy, may suffer a sea change. For humanism, which draws its chief support from classical philosophy and art, has especially trained its guns on the pretensions of the natural sciences and the humanit arian philosophy of the social sciences. So if it becomes the way to salvation, Latin and Greek will jostle the studies just mentioned into a less conspicuous place in our catalogues. But not only may the curricula of our universities be affected, the qualifications required of professors of language and literature may also undergo change. Toward that scientific type of specialized literary scholarship which was imported into this country from Germany in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the humanists maintain by no means a sympathetic attitude, and if the movement should become strong enough to depreciate seriously

the value of such scholarship, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that professors of the traditional type will find themselves "behind the procession". The fact that the author of *The American Scholar*, a humanistic book which attacks the type of instruction given in our graduate schools and the nature of the researches of our professors of literature, has landed a fat job, may exert no small influence toward making others see the light. For college professors have a natural yearning for the most remunerative positions. Furthermore, if humanism continues to grow in publicity value, we may be sure administrators will not be slow to scour the country for the possessors of this academic virtue.

II.

Inasmuch as many critics of the new humanism have complained of their inability to understand what they are criticizing, it seems imperative that I attempt a definition, however inadequate. It is a philosophy the general principles of which, when applied to the proper fields, have resulted in a literary criticism, an art criticism, a pedagogy, a sociology, a political economy, a psychology, a moral philosophy, and while not in a new religion, in an affirmation of some of the elements of traditional religion and a denial of others. We may as well go to the heart of the matter and say at once that the keystone of this philosophy is contained in what has been called the inner check or the will to refrain. (The humanists are specialists in the will to refrain.) To realize the existence of this power within us, self-examination and self-knowledge are necessary, but when these are employed, the inner check becomes the most significant of all the data of consciousness. Moreover, it proves to be the only element in man detached from those other elements which relate him to the natural world. It is the only distinctively human element, and alone furnishes the basis for that distinction between the law for man and the law for the thing, which is one of the central pillars of this philosophy. For this reason the term "humanism" has been appropriated by the proponents of the philosophy. (It is to be noted that the term, which heretofore has generally been applied to the Renaissance, has been considerably narrowed. The old meaning had reference to the spirit which prompted man to

employ all of his faculties for the enriching of life on this earth as opposed to the asceticism of the middle ages which sought happiness chiefly in the world to come. It seems perfectly permissible for the humanists to narrow the word in this fashion, since they are obligated to draw a sharp distinction between the will to refrain and other faculties in man which to them seem related to the external world). The term "flux" has been given to everything other than the inner check, both in man and the universe; the term comprises all the impressions of the enveloping world and our mental reactions to them in the form of desires; that is, personal emotions such as pleasure, pain, misery, love, sympathy, and the like, as well as less reputable feelings. Imagination and reason are forces in the flux obedient to the inner check. Now all social, intellectual, artistic, and moral phenomena are the result of the exercise or non-exercise of this control. If, for instance, reason is not properly checked, we have scientific naturalism which expects to find in nature the key to truth. If, on the other hand, imagination and emotion are not restrained, we have various phenomena which are generally grouped under the term Romanticism. For instance, if sympathy is permitted unlimited activity, the result is a humanitarianism which, disregarding rational limits, is likely to bring the world to such a pass that only brute force can control the situation. Especially serious is the mistake of attributing to the desires and emotions residing in the flux the matter of human truth, and in allowing them to control life. Much of our social theory and too many of our educational ideas are based upon the theory of the goodness of impulse, instinct, feeling, in short, upon the goodness of the natural man, and upon a corresponding hostility to control and discipline. Both science and romanticism expect to find truth in the flux, the one through uncontrolled reason, the other through uncontrolled emotion and imagination, but, say the humanists, the key to truth lies in the will to refrain.

What I have said is a short and inadequate statement of humanism strictly considered, but in most cases its meaning has been extended to include a spiritual world. By the light of this conception we see in man a creature standing between two worlds, related to the lower by most of his characteristics and to the higher by the inner check. He is the point at which the two

spheres are tangent. Thus humanism is a distinct dualism in which not only is no attempt made to reconcile the two disparate elements; such an attempt is actually considered dangerous. In this respect it runs counter to most modern philosophies which are monistic in theory or implication.

Now all this may strike you as it struck Rebecca West, in a severe blast against the movement, as exceedingly elementary, as indeed, only representing childhood instruction. Yet Doctor Johnson says man needs more often to be reminded than informed, and certainly it is not what man knows but what he thinks of that is likely to do him any good. Surely we have only to look around us to see innumerable indications that man has all but completely forgotten the simplest elements of this teaching. The lawlessness and recklessness of our modern civilization, impatient as it is of the most elementary control, and the chaotic condition of the arts, which have thrown off the restraint of form and control of standards, clearly demonstrate that man has grown oblivious to his childhood lessons. We have become so accustomed to "stepping on the gas", literally as well as figuratively, that we hate to use the brakes or shift gears. One reason, perhaps, that humanism has awakened the response it has is that people are beginning to be alarmed over the lawlessness of society, chaos of art, and demoralization of individual character. Again, the humanists have confirmed their philosophy by such a thorough ransacking of ancient and modern learning and art, have analyzed so acutely the ills of all ages, and have developed such discriminating definitions, that they have remade the old, or at least have given it a new face. But still again, they have applied their consistent and comprehensive, but far from complicated, philosophy to so many diverse phenomena, and have through their analyses revealed such unsuspected affinities between the elements of these phenomena, that the significance of what may be apparently commonplace is greatly enhanced.

We find, then, this inner check directly opposed to the emotions and desires resident in the flux. Naturally there must be some mediation between the two. There must be some standards by which the inner check may exercise control, may say thus far and no farther. Moreover, a study of tradition and the literatures that have revealed the humanistic spirit will make for the dis-

covery of these standards, which need not be rigid and inelastic but flexible and responsive to the age that applies them. Yet they must be in a certain sense objective. They must not reside in the emotional or naturalistic element in man, but must be principles placed above this element, in accordance with which all thought and conduct should be controlled. For this reason the humanists are sternly opposed to that romantic individualism both in life and art which makes the individual a law unto himself. The one general principle that governs all these standards is the old adage, "Nothing too much", and the Golden Mean of the Greeks. But if, on the one hand, humanism would seem to substitute a mechanical conformity to external conventions for the seemingly richer experience of individualistic action, on the other, it actually emphasizes the essentially real nature of these standards, which, though general, every one should make real through vigorous activity of his reason and imagination. And whereas the one who follows individualistic promptings sooner or later is oppressed with the sense of isolation and restlessness, those who employ the inner check and reason to the discovery of guiding principles will find the only common ground upon which men can stand and so experience the true sense of human community and the feeling of repose.

III.

But the aspect of this movement that chiefly interests us is its literary criticism, and before proceeding directly to apply its principles to romantic poetry, it may be advisable to make clear these principles. In the highest art, namely classical art, the imagination is subject both to reason and the inner check, or in other words, it is held to a rational and ethical center. The result is manifested both in the form and in the content of a poem. Just as in life the will to refrain is guided by standards which reason discovers largely in tradition, so in art the standards and forms of past art, elastic, however, rather than rigid, act as a restraining guide to poetic composition and impose form on the chaos of the poet's imagination. In other words, imitation is rehabilitated as an artistic virtue, though the term must not be too narrowly construed. Form, then, is the first fruit of an ethically controlled imagination. The next is insight. The will to refrain

imposes limits upon the impulses and desires of the flux, and holds the imagination to an ethical center, creating by means of an illusion an imaginative insight into the universal or infinite. This ethical center, identified, as I have said, with the inner check, is the human law as opposed to the law of things, and is the result of self-knowledge. The ethical control of the imagination gives purpose to that faculty and relates it to life in a deep and fundamental manner. Perhaps we may express this in the following simpler but somewhat inadequate manner: classical art embodies those values that are pertinent to any well regulated life, and gives them emotional confirmation and imaginative depth.

Romantic poetry, on the other hand, possesses neither insight nor reason. The romantic imagination is merely a child of the flux seeking complete liberty for sensation, instincts, and emotions. It seeks expansion rather than concentration, limitlessness rather than infinity; it tries to find the universal in the flux rather than in the inner check. It is a purposeless Arcadian revery, a spiritual idling and drifting, possessing no ethic center of control and bearing no relation to life. It identifies being with feeling and thinking with musing, seeking not reality but an illusion which resides in the flux and which is a fugitive, troubled, strange beauty. Having no standard or control but itself, it suffers the sadness of isolation, and ends in disillusionment and despair. To quote Professor Babbitt, "Romanticism is the indulgence of infinite indetermined desire to an endless and aimless vagabondage of emotions, with the imagination as their free accomplice".¹

It may be well to repeat again that the imagination is a faculty responsive to emotion and to thought and conscience. When its creations are determined by an ethical reason, the result is one of concentration and intensity. When the imagination obeys emotions only, the result is expansion and diffuseness. In this connection Sir Francis Bacon, who incidentally shares with Rousseau the blame for most of our modern ills, has expressed an illuminating idea. Poetry, he says, with evident approval, "doth raise and erect the Mind, by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the Mind, whereas reason doth buckle and bow the

¹This paragraph is taken from a previous essay by the present writer.

Mind unto the Nature of things". Interpreted in humanistic terms this means that poetry is the result of the imagination responsive to desire; that the imagination stimulated and directed by emotion creates out of sensation and impressions its land of heart's desires. As Omar says:

Ah love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire
Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
Remould it never to the heart's desire.

Whereas Bacon had material things chiefly in mind when he spoke of reason's buckling the mind to the nature of things, the humanists would claim that in the highest poetry, reason and restraint should buckle the imagination to the reality of human and spiritual truth. Instead of allowing reason to be monopolized by scientific inquiry, there to assume final authority on all matters, they would dedicate it to the far greater purpose of realizing the true nature of man.

There is one innate and dangerous characteristic of emotions unrestrained by human control, upon which the humanists lay great emphasis, and that is, their expansive nature. The emotions when left to themselves determine neither limits nor direction, but expand to an indeterminate limitlessness. The expansive emotions humanism considers dangerous in life and apparently reprehensible when embodied in art, in which domain they tend to destroy form and to remove art from its proper relation to the business of life. That this characterization of those emotions dear to the romantic poets is just, is apparent to any one familiar with their poetry. This will become plain, I think, if we briefly analyze Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale", which many consider the high-water mark of romantic poetry, and which certainly contains more elements of romanticism than almost any other poem we could name. As everyone knows, the poem opens with an indulgence of the emotion aroused by the nightingale's song to such an extent that the song produces the effect of an opiate:

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk.

Then, after a few lines, follow a desire for intoxication and complete liberation:

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delv'd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O, for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stain'd mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim.

But it is perhaps in the next stanza that we have the most extreme expression of an expansive mood.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-ey'd despairs,
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

Without doubt the desire to dissolve, ridiculous when separated from the mood of which it is the supreme expression, finds no justification in mind or conscience. This expansive emotion, curbed by no rational consideration nor ethical responsibility, finds the solution of the trials and sorrows of life only in forgetfulness. It is not, however, actual intoxication the poet desires, even though the wine be of a purely literary nature; he desires to flee

Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards.

Through the transport of a liberated imagination he seeks complete release from a rational control that "perplexes and retards". And what is his haven of refuge from a sorrowful world? Only a riot of sensations doubly distilled by the fancy from "verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways", "white hawthorn and pastoral eglantine", "Fast fading violets", and "the musk-rose, full of

dewy wine". The solution of life is a departure from life into a world of sensuous appeal only. The flux becomes our salvation. But once more the note of dissolution is struck, this time in the desire for death.

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
I have been half in love with careless Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain.

The dissolution of death is the very antithesis of the concentration of life. Expansive emotions can reach no more final expression. Yet once more the fancy expands to "ancient days" and "faery lands forlorn" but the last word breaks the spell, for intoxication of the imagination, just like another kind, has its morning after.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu, Adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades;
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

From this example we may pass to the general statement that there are many moods and emotions in romantic poetry, indeed in the verse most characteristically romantic, which both judgment and conscience must condemn when they are indulged in actual life, emotions of this same expansive uncentered nature. In fact, if we bring this poetry under the test of the common decent values of life, it simply will not pass muster. Take, for instance, the Bacchanalian spirit of Burns, best exemplified in that remarkable poem celebrating a home-brew party, which, I must admit, has always been a favorite of mine.

O Willie brew'd a peck O'maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to sie;
Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang night,
Ye wad na found in Christendie.
We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our ee;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we'll taste the barley bree.

When the spirit of which this poem is such a superb expression is

manifested in the flesh, it secures not only our condemnation but also the attention of the police. Again, self-pity is an emotion which any healthy nature scorns. The whining wail that greets life's hardships from those who feel sorely tried may at first arouse our pity, but is more likely in the long run to incite our contempt. And yet it is hard to find more beauty in any poem than in those stanzas of Shelley's *Adonais* which embody this expansive mood. The poem, as you know, is a lament for Keats, and in one place describes the contemporary poets, who, disguised as shepherds, pass Keats' bier. Shelley pictures himself in this fashion:

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Has gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts along that rugged way,
Pursued like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

A pardlike spirit beautiful and swift—
A love in desolation masked;—a Power
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

Whenever an emotion comes clothed in such sensuous imagery and attuned to such verbal melody, analysis and judgment are likely to be paralyzed and we are rendered blind to the true nature of the emotion.

Cynicism and misanthropy are emotions which have beguiled many youthful moments, and are likely to be viewed with a tolerant smile when they are lightly transient. But is it not a dark hatred of man, as inexcusable as it is abnormal, that permeates

Byron's poetry. He deliberately chooses the restless ever-changing flux to companionship with his own kind, whom he loathes or affects to loathe with an unintermittent intensity. Perhaps of all his poems the most admired is his famous apostrophe to the ocean:

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
 Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
 Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
 The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
 When for a moment, like a drop of rain,
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
 Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths—thy fields
 Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
 And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
 For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
 Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
 And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
 And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
 His petty home in some near port or bay
 And dashest him again to earth:—there let him lay.

If one of our citizens, filled with admiration and love for the terrific power and irresistible force of the recent tornado that swept through St. Louis, had lifted paeans of praise to the skies and gloated over the destruction of his fellow men as Byron does, we would have considered him either utterly mad or a fiend incarnate.

But more than any of the other romantic poets Wordsworth claims to find religion and morality in the expansive emotions resident in the flux. His admirers have enthusiastically accepted his naturalistic religion, seemingly unaware it is as nebulous as the cloud Ixion embraced. In the same element in which scientists look for mechanic laws, he looks for God:

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean and the living air,
 And the blue sky.

And his moral philosophy has received not the slightest tincture

from any conception of restraint or control, but is only an expansive emotional mingling with the landscape:

Well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

And for further moral instruction he has only to stroll into the woods, knowing that

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the ages can.

To base moral law upon the emotions aroused by ear and eye impressions is certainly to raise those organs from a physical to a spiritual plane. And we should guard them with the utmost care for if we should become deaf or blind, our moral natures would be sadly impaired, and if we should become both, we would be hopelessly damned. I think that our common experience teaches us that moral stability is secured and maintained only by unremitting effort and the constant exercise of the will to refrain. It is incredible that moral natures may be developed by the extremely easy method of viewing the country-side. Nor is it any easier to understand Wordsworth's "spontaneous wisdom", when to us wisdom seems only the long result of thought and experience, while his "wise passiveness" and his dreaming his time away, if manifested in our friends would be stigmatized by uglier terms. Indeed, the idling, drifting, day-dreaming mood which is embodied in so much of his poetry, as well as in that of the other romantics, if translated into the practice of life would only emphasize the futility of existence.

IV.

In the preceding section I have analyzed a few Romantic Poems in an effort to show what happens when we examine romantic poetry from the humanistic point of view. I have selected only the better known and most beautiful passages of the more significant poets. It would be an easy matter to collect, almost at random, innumerable passages from the whole range of romantic verse which would produce the same results as those already se-

cured. The liberated imagination, freed from rational and ethical restraint, and responsive to the stimulation of expansive emotions is alone responsible for this poetry. We may conclude, then, that the moods most characteristic of romantic art, to say nothing of the pseudo-philosophy born of those moods, can find no approved place in the actual business of life.

But what are we to do with such poetry? Shall we ban it from our libraries, prohibit its importation from abroad, and leave it to be "bootlegged" among the unregenerate? We might, were it not for one fact, namely, that none of us feels in the least contaminated by reading such poetry; we cannot detect the slightest injury done our characters nor the fostering of similar moods in our lives. Can we then commend in art what we condemn in life? Is there such distinct cleavage between life and poetry that the values of one are irrelevant to the other? In answer to these questions a strict neo-classicist would say no; a thorough-going romanticist, yes. As in most questions, the truth seems to lie between the two, in both "yes" and "no". The romanticist who embodies a passionate creed in Art for Art's sake, who believes that conscience and mind have no place in poetry errs as widely as the neo-classicist and more dangerously. Certainly there is no higher function of art than to invest morality with beauty and to give imaginative depth to spiritual conceptions. The problems of existence, the struggles of life, possess a beauty which may be reached by imaginative insight, and which when so reached enshrines and illumines the austere facts of experience. The values, intellectual and ethical, of our daily intercourse may be caught up into a higher imaginative realm and there receive an emotional confirmation which reacts powerfully upon our lower sphere. Certainly life in its wholeness and the complete integrity of experience have been and can be the business of art. That poetry which outrages neither reason nor conscience, and in which moods and emotions may be approved by the values of life stands secure against the futile attacks of lopsided critics.

But we would be equally as unbalanced in judgment did we not recognize that there is another purpose in art just as legitimate. Art may illuminate life, it is true, but it may just as surely furnish an escape from life. And this escape is effected through the release of those very qualities kept under control in a well-

regulated existence. May we not declare that romantic poetry is nothing more than a liberation, in the imagination, of those fancies and emotions which as regards personal conduct must be restrained? Therein lies the wide appeal such poetry makes; that is, in the pleasure afforded by relief from restraint and by the consequent act of expanding.

The imagination responsive only to mood and desire, and obeying no laws but those which its artistic purpose demands, creates beautiful and pleasure-giving images that bring solace and release from the burden of existence. Nor do we lower the dignity of poetry when we say beauty may be its only end, for the love of beauty, as Sir Philip Sidney said long ago, appeals only to man, is, indeed, an humanistic virtue. Thus romantic poetry may be fully justified by the pleasure alone which its beauty gives, even though that beauty is an end in itself and carries no deeper significance.

We must remember, too, that a mood in art and a mood in life may be quite different things. The imagination, whether concentrative or expansive, has the power so to refine emotions as to render them distinctly different from those of life. The subject of "Willie brewed a peck o'maut" is sheer intoxication, but the mood engendered in our imagination by the poem retains only the high spirits without the physical degradation. Shelley's self-pity creates such beautiful images, that no semblance of its earthly meanness remains. The egotism and misanthropy of Byron justify themselves by the beauty of the poetry they produce and are quite foreign to those same emotions in life. When such emotions as these, evil though they be in relation to character, are passed through the refining process of the imagination and subjected to the form art imposes upon them, the result is a product quite different from its material. Romantic art gives pleasure because it releases those emotions life restrains, but being an imaginative experience, and subject to laws of its own, it neither undermines character nor falsifies life. It leads us from this world of moral values and intellectual labors into a world of its own, in which sheer delight in beauty is the only law.

A word may even be said in behalf of those generalizations which frequently appear in romantic verse, and which seem to be pronounced as universal truths applicable to life. A single ex-

ample will suffice. One of the romantic *dicta* most widely discussed and debated is Keats' "Beauty is truth, truth beauty". Professor Babbitt inveighs against it as destroying the integrity of life. And most assuredly it does, if we try to base a philosophy of life upon it. Any one who has a balanced mind and has touched life at more than one point knows that verity has a much wider base than is revealed in this narrow equation. But the mistake lies in making applicable to life a generalization that is only aesthetically necessary to the completion of the mood. The poetic mood developed, for instance in Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is the permanency of the joy and beauty depicted on the urn as contrasted with their transient nature in actual life: the unheard melody which the fair youth beneath the trees will always play; the bold lover who will always have near him the fair maiden of never-fading loveliness; the happy boughs that can never shed their leaves and the little town forever silent. Throughout the stanzas, then, is growing the feeling that the beauty of art endures even unto eternity and that its appeal is unvarying, (which is, of course, literally true). How may the mood born of this unvarying and enduring beauty reach its highest expression but through its identification with the word which is the highest embodiment of changelessness and duration, truth. Thus we see that the generalization is the climax, the inevitable goal toward which the thought is moving; that it is absolutely essential for the completion of the mood; that it rounds out, sums up, and completely encompasses the whole poem. Literally it is the urn, not Keats, that pronounces the words. So the lines reveal not a universal truth but an artistic necessity; and we must consider them relative only to the mood, and not to life.

There is yet another reason why we should not attach too much blame to the apparent statements of universal truth which occur in the verse we are considering, and which the humanists violently attack for being false and pernicious. One of the most unvarying characteristics of romantic poetry is what may be called the motif of escape. The romanticist considered life, as we mean the term, only a vale of cruelty and suffering, and he looked upon art as a means of escape from the dreary place. And this escape he sought through the poetic expression of personal emotions. He was really not interested in the problems and questions of exist-

ence; he was only interested in getting away. So we can hardly expect him to legislate for a world he has forsaken, and we should not apply his aphorisms to this world; rather, we should consider them only as one device to secure his imaginative liberation from it. That he was not concerned with moral choice or decision is revealed in his inability, for the most part, to handle the two great types of poetry, dramatic and narrative, which are adapted to the portraying of the clash between ethic will and desire, or, to use a favorite expression of the humanists, the civil war in a cave. His poetry was lyrical, subjective, individualistic, and not related to human conduct.

If, of course, the poet should show inconsistency enough to prescribe wisdom for a world which he has deserted, and if his reader should be so off guard as to interpret his generalizations as binding truths or to admit into conduct moods justified only in creations of the imagination, the results would, indeed, be disastrous. Furthermore, since, as we have said, Romanticism is much wider than its mere manifestation in poetry, we do find that in the past two centuries much romantic philosophy has been foisted on the world, a philosophy that has been incorporated only too frequently and widely both in the conduct of individuals and in the development of society. The humanists have done yeoman's service in analysing so thoroughly the nature of Romanticism and in pointing out the dangerous consequences that must inevitably follow, when the romantic spirit becomes a guide to conduct. When man seeks to find his moral law in trees, stones, or glands, morality will vanish from the earth. If he attempts to reorganize society on the basis of universal love and sympathy, casting law and punishment into the discard, society will disintegrate. If he seeks to find the whole of life's solution in beauty he will find himself dwelling in a palace of art. If day-dreaming, musing, drifting, idling, and such become the order of the day, heroic achievement will be numbered among the things of yesterday. In short, if conduct is to be determined by expansive emotions, subject to no control of mind or conscience, and guided by an imagination likewise subject to no restraint, we shall find ourselves to be only tormented and restless children of the flux, rudderless barks on the ever-heaving, ever-changing sea of naturalism.

It must be admitted that there are passages in romantic verse in which the poet seems to be proclaiming a universal truth for mankind. On numerous occasions we feel that Wordsworth is more intent on teaching than on giving pleasure, and William Blake occasionally gives utterance to bits of romantic wisdom with the certitude of a Biblical prophet. Blake is, indeed, one of the most interesting figures in the romantic movement. In him the spirit of romanticism appears *in vacuo*, as it were; that is, without any alloy or modifying element. He carried to their ultimate conclusions ideas which others left at various stages of their development. The following selection from his prose poem entitled *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* shows clearly where romantic principles logically end when carried far enough. We must first, however, rid ourselves of the traditional way of viewing Hell and its possessor, for Blake was enamoured of them. "As I was walking", he says with startling nonchalance, "among the fires of hell, delighted with the endowments of Genius, which to angels look like torment and insanity, I collected some of their Proverbs; thinking that as the sayings used in a nation mark its character, so the Proverbs of Hell show the nature of Infernal wisdom better than any description of buildings or garments. When I came home; on the abyss of the five senses, where a flat sided steep frowns over the present world, I saw a mighty Devil folded in black clouds, hovering on the sides of the rock: with corroding fires he wrote the following sentences now perceived by the minds of men, and read by them on earth". Then follow the Proverbs of Hell, a few of which follow:

Exuberance is beauty.
 The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.
 He who desires, but acts not, breeds pestilence.
 Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted
 Desires.
 The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

Could there be a more complete renunciation of any principle of control than is contained in these diabolic aphorisms, or any more complete surrender to desires, impulses, and emotions which are here formulated into guiding principles? (As you have doubtless noted, Blake anticipates certain theories of modern psychology, thereby showing their romantic origin.) But there is consistency in Blake. Knowing that traditional religion and morality have

consigned to Hell and the Devil those very desires which he would exalt, he calmly accepts both terms with their usual meaning. Only he maintains an approving attitude toward them. Blake, I am sure, would stoutly maintain that the Devil was the first romanticist.

But whatever we may think of romantic philosophy, it was, nevertheless, an important discovery in art which poets began to make, rather more unconsciously than consciously, about the middle of the eighteenth century. The aesthetic law that they discovered was as fundamental to one type of poetry as the second law of thermo-dynamics is to physics, for it declared, though never stated in so many words, that any expansive emotion, which, when granted full liberty, gives pleasure in life is capable of stimulating the artistic imagination to the creation of more exquisite sensuous beauty than could be derived from any other source. And so we see in the latter half of the century such emotions as melancholy, sympathy, fear, the desire to mingle with the universe, and the like, overrunning the whole domain of poetry. Now, the psychological factor underlying the pleasure referred to is this very matter of expansion. Unless the emotions are allowed to expand, beauty fades and pleasure dwindles. It was the intuitive recognition of this fact that inspired the strenuous opposition to any form of rational restraint which characterized the romantic movement. But a principle that is of great significance for art may be disastrous in life. And herein lies the trouble. Romanticism was a wide phenomenon which comprehended nearly all of man's activities. The poetry under discussion was only one manifestation of a spirit that was revealed in political, sociological, educational, psychological, religious, and other fields of thought. There is no denying that then, just as now, enthusiastic efforts were made to impose upon men principles that asserted the primacy of expansive emotions and scientific or naturalistic reason, and which proposed these as a guide for personal conduct and for the determination of social policy. And it is against such a philosophy that the humanists are sternly inveighing as being destructive to individual happiness and dangerous to civilization. Yet the romantic paradox remains: the emotions that are reprehensible in life render poetry exceeding beautiful.

V.

The question naturally arises: what about the lives of the romantic poets themselves? We who read their poetry experience their moods only after they have been transformed by the artistic imagination. But these moods must have existed in the poets before passing into art. Do their lives reflect the results of such emotions? We cannot at this time go into the biographies of even those writers who have been mentioned in this essay. In general, we may say that their lives do reflect the unhappy consequences of the expansive emotions which gave beauty to their verse. (We purchase at a price our pleasure in reading their poems.) Sorrow, restlessness, disillusion were the portions of only too many of them. The lives of some, like Wordsworth, were brought to a peaceful close, but only because they changed in mid-career to another philosophy. Wordsworth has left us a remarkable account of the beginning of such a change in him. In the "Ode to Duty" he deliberately asks for the restraint which duty, one of the highest restraining principles placed above the flux, can exert on his impulses, desires, and emotions.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires:
I feel the weight of chance desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

In these few lines, Wordsworth, who of all the romantics could best describe psychological experiences, has unconsciously diagnosed, even in humanistic terms, the romantic malady which springs from the uncontrolled emotions of the flux. Of course, by the time he had completed the change, he had ceased to be a poet.

The humanists would not seriously object to most of what I say in defence of romantic poetry. They do allow it the function of "recreation", to use their own term, which I do not like. Yet their frequent denunciations of the emotions revealed by this verse, have alienated many that might have been sympathetic with their philosophy. They do not take pains enough to point out the real merits of the poems they cite as the embodiments of

dangerous emotions nor discriminate between emotions in relation to conduct and in relation to art. Seeing in the work of Shelley or Keats or Wordsworth an abandonment to emotions which in modern philosophy and life they think, plausibly enough, are leading to destruction, they strike out, disregarding all difference between a poetry that pleases and a philosophy that governs. They really reach through romantic verse to strike at the spurious philosophical ideas which seem to be undermining civilization. They employ literary criticism as a means of exposing the evils of the times; it is only a weapon wherewith to fight the rising tide of naturalism. Thus, though they draw much of their evidence from literature, they are really more interested in life than in art. It is not without significance that one of the last books of Mr. Babbitt's is entitled *Democracy and Leadership*, and that Mr. More's latest work is a profound study of Christianity. It is largely their interest in the right ways of living that determines their attack on Romanticism and especially their regard for classical art. For they believe that the latter by embodying the principle of restraint, which is the keystone of their philosophy, and by reflecting the values that should govern life, would be of great assistance in introducing these desirable elements into our civilization.

The things for which the humanists are striving are certainly not undesirable. In art they wish form, decorum, and moral significance. They desire art in which parodies are distinguishable from serious endeavours, and in which one can tell whether a picture is hung upside down or not. In philosophy they wish to break the strangle hold that science has placed upon the true study of man's nature, by confining scientific activities to the natural world and to the elements of the flux within man, and by insisting upon the importance of self-examination and self-knowledge as the means of arriving at the human law as distinguished from the law of the thing. In life they are advocating the traditional decencies only: manners, morality, self-restraint, common sense, temperate emotions, moderated desires, a law-abiding spirit, and the rational control of our machine age. And they hold out to us the hope that if we accept the philosophy of the flux and the will to refrain, and if we bring, through reason, this control to bear upon our search for knowledge and upon our

desires and emotions, we shall lay the foundation of a stable and decorous society, and we shall have peace, "And faith! we shall need it".

My purpose in this essay has been to save romantic poetry from the general reproach which has been, with a great deal of justification, heaped upon Romanticism. My defence is based squarely on the detachment of this type of art from life, on the legitimacy of an art which through beauty and pleasure offers an escape from life, and on the difference between a mood which has passed through the creative imagination and one related to conduct. I would not conclude, however, without issuing an unsolicited warning regarding the reading of this poetry. Probably the prevailing attitude toward literature is one that seeks to find in the latter the materials for a philosophy of life, a confirmation and strengthening of those values discovered by tradition and experience, or, to use the hackneyed term, ideals. Fortunately, much great literature finds a lofty mission in just this purpose. But to read in this way the poetry discussed here today is not only to be misled, but is actually to do romantic verse a great injustice by subjecting it to standards by which it should not be measured. We can enjoy a sunset without expecting to find a solution of life's problems there. It is only by emphasizing the dual function of art, and by drawing a sharp line of demarcation between the values of life and those of a type of poetry which fulfills its mission in the creation of beauty alone, that confusion can be avoided, the integrity of life preserved, and artistic taste and pleasure justified.

by A. K. D., Jr.

LONGFELLOW GUEDALLIES WITH INFIDELITY

Wives of great men all remind us
We can make their lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Foot-notes on the shelves of time.

by Sam M. Steward

THE PASSION AND THE SOUL OF PETRARCH

I. THE ROOTS OF HUMANISM

BEFORE Petrarch there were indeed stirrings of the mediaeval soul, vague and uneasy turnings, with no aim. The ninth and the twelfth centuries glimmered with a light as faint as a moon-silver when the sun begins to rise. There was not much illumination or warmth or fecundation. In the twelfth century Peter Abelard was lecturing in Paris, Peter the Venerable was travelling in Spain to commission a translation of the Koran about which he was infinitely curious, Adelard of Bath was writing his book on natural philosophy under the patronage of the Bishop of Syracuse, Thierry was lecturing on the new Aristotle, half restored to scholarship. But these made a revival of literature, not a revival of ancient learning, and France proved merely the mirage of an oasis. For hovering over it, and indeed over all of Europe, were the threatening, formidable wings of mediaevalism, the deadening and discouraging conception of a universal Church and a universal empire; in the monasteries little spurts of the flame flared and quickly died, because under this conception no light could burn. Existence, however, was not so shadowed or drab as by right these wings should have made it; the color of life everywhere was the deep unrelieved red of the cardinalic robe. Life was hard and fast and for the young; it was lived, whether good or bad, with a purposeful and absolute intensity.

Imperceptibly, almost, the threatening shadows of the Church began to waver and to grow translucent. But behind them was still a thicker curtain between earth and sun, a barrier which strangely enough appeared luminous and was mistaken for the real light from heaven. It was Scholastic Philosophy, and foolishly it strove to gather under its unifying fingers all that existed

of knowledge; it strove to mold this diverse wisdom into a pattern that might fit the cast of truth, yet the thaumaturgus seeking to knead mandrake roots into living substance met with more success than did these futile attempts.

Scholastic Philosophy, fading into air as the fourteenth century approached its centerpoint, revealed finally the sun's warm glow, and with the light of the real sun humanism was identical. In the essentially mystical, more or less naïve, unconscious and confident bridging of the gap betwixt antiquity and Christianity, lay the source of the radiation. It was not an even light; it burned unsteadily, shifting from one pole to the other, vagrant as it had always been, seeming to remember its earliest conflicts when Christ was placed beside Virgil who made a part of the pagan environment with which the new faith fought so fiercely and hopelessly. For the Virgin Mary and roseate Venus drew breath from the same placental vine, Christ and Apollo had but one heart, and that the Latin language. It was the silliest of all warfare, and Christ defeated ere he began. The book was open; all who could read Latin, ecclesiastics and clerics who knew the technical rudiments, could browse in this vast store of Latinity and paganism. The contradiction proceeded blandly and brazenly, unresolved from age to age, inherent in the tradition of the ecclesiastical system. Each goat-foot wore a halo, and beneath the angel's pure raiment one sensed the presence of furry flanks. And Abelard, perceiving this, querulously demands why those high in the Christian religion do not expel from the City of God those poets whom Plato forbade to enter his city of the world, while Nicholas, secretary to Bernard of Clairvaux, sighs over the charm he had once found in Cicero and the golden sayings of the philosophers.

Since the twelfth century not many additional manuscripts of antiquity have come to light, and little of importance has been lost. To the Benedictines in large part must go the credit of survival, at the Abbey of Fulda, Ferrères and Cluny and other places they preserved the rolls for access. Access, however, did not in each case mean actual usage, and some—such as the *Germania* of Tacitus and the poems of Catullus—lay in unique manuscripts alone and dusty in neglected cells, touched once a day by a bright mote of sunlight travelling over them and otherwise unrevealed.

And many of the heavier larger Roman works were pushed aside because of the sheer weariness of monastic arms experienced in handling them, and smaller compends pressed into use. Lucretius, delighting the modern age with *De Rerum Natura*, made no friends among the mediaeval brothers who understood him not. The subtle canons of taste and the accessibility of manuscripts regulated the literary perspectives, and aided in the limiting of the vision of literature.

The humanism that existed, then, before Petrarch, was visible only as rifts appeared in the cloud of Scholastic Philosophy; it was a spontaneous, blindly loving humanism that concealed itself in the presence of orthodoxy, an uncritical fanciful attitude which cleared of thorns the path to formal and critical humanistic interpretations. The wary (or unwary, if you will) monks found a justification for the classical world in making of Virgil a prophet who expressed the truth of philosophy under the guise of fable and in the *Æneid* unfolded an allegory of human life from infancy to age; in swearing that they perused Ovid because he pointed a moral end in *The Remedies of Love*, comfortably neglecting to remember that from *The Art of Love* and the *Metamorphoses* they derived immense delight. Out of Cerberus they drew the lineaments of Saint Peter; they wrenched Olympus from its earthly anchorage and set it floating about vaguely and invisibly in the sky, renaming it Paradise. From Horatian love songs they quoted many a bit of worldly wisdom, changed into *ethici* to excuse the origin, and they pretended to see in Bacchus's coronal of grapes the bitter thorns of Calvary.

Thus fastidiously, with soulful and mystical fingers, the mediaeval people drew from the bowl of antiquity all of the tidbits and left to the philologists the unhappy and as yet thankless task of preserving the bowl, intact and unbroken, from their drunken grasping. Of the substance of antiquity they did not drink deeply enough to become intoxicated, and only those who have been drunken together can love and understand each other. Because the Church was sometimes hostile, these mediaeval guardians at times demonstrated the bowl's likeness to the Grail, and so saved the beauty of the outer shell although the inner pagan substance was destroyed. The form endured, though the content for them was tainted by the blood of Christ.

The way is clear for Petrarch, who first since the exile of the gods dared to be wholly drunken with them; who first laid his mind, like a white courtesan, open to the rape of antiquity.

II. PETRARCH AND GHERARDO

The study of an intellect may sometimes be enlightened by a glance at the simplest facts in the life of its possessor, and it would be folly to study the works of Petrarch without remembering that as well as being the lover of Laura he was the brother of Gherardo, three years his junior, with whom in exile he had grown into manhood, and of whom he often thought with delight. The pressure of banishment, the rigour with which their household was kept must have augmented the intimacy of the two brothers and aided in early binding them together with a warm affection. Petrarch speaks of him as his 'brother dearer than life' and elsewhere¹ he says: "Between them (brothers reared together) there was equality in all things, and solid knots bound their reciprocated affection . . . I know of no love stronger than that which unites two brothers." Later, returning to Avignon after their father's death in 1326, they saw the fragile flowers of the tenderness of their younger years ripened into the amity of strong men.

Gherardo must have been a wholesome person with a savour about him of October ale and apples; he did not partake of his brother's tastes for erudition nor his curiosity for learning. He perhaps, with solemn bourgeois concern, looked askance at his brother's love for travel. But for a time this common-sense of Gherardo's was certainly obscured under the pale gold and purple life the two lived at Avignon, wearing the most elegant and exquisite habiliments, spending hours with the curling-iron and the paste-box. Both of them, conforming to all details of *la vie élégante* loved their fair ladies: Petrarch, with his superior mind, finding in the daily contrasts between the heights of his thought and love and the lownesses of his life, the sources of music and eternal song, the fountain head of that melancholy and *acedia* that he has so sovereignly expressed; Gherardo, adoring his 'bella donna' with a love a bit stolid and uninspiring but achingly sincere and coura-

¹Fam. X, 3.

²De rem. I. cap. 84.

geously of the flesh, outstripping his brother in frivolity and disorder.

Into this drama of two souls on the loose there enters another, a stabler one, that of Father Dionigi who in 1333 gave to the elder brother the key which unlocked for him the door to the Holy Scripture and Christian virtue. For three years the soul of Petrarch wavered between the discipleship of the sensual life and that of Saint Augustine. And while he was debating, while he was pondering, the lady beloved of Gherardo died, and "did pass, when least we thought, beyond our gaze". Sick with reality and suffering from the wrenched ties, Gherardo finds that he can scarce tolerate the frivolity, the insincerity of the life which has never really appealed to him below its surface; he and his brother, by a common accord, retire to Vacluse in the autumn of 1337. Already in the April of 1336, the ascent of Mount Ventoux, most popular anecdote of the poet, had set Petrarch to pondering on the superficiality of their life; Augustine had cemented his conclusion, and the death of Gherardo's lady, sometime early in 1337, added the last touch to his conviction that their existence had been a bit pointless. It is intriguing to suppose that the retreat to Vacluse may have had, among many other causes, the motivation of fraternal affection, of pity for his sorrowing younger brother.

From this point things move clearly. Gherardo, in 1341 or 1342, left Vacluse for the Carthusian monastery at Montrieu, unable longer to find even the life with his brother satisfactory. Petrarch speeds him with a sonnet:

Since you and I full many a proof can bring
That vain and false have been each hope and joy,
Lift up your heart unto a better thing,
That highest good that never brings annoy.
This earthly life is like a meadow green
Where the snake lies in flowers and grass entwined,
And where the eyes delight in what is seen,
The vision charms and captivates the mind.
If therefore, you would have your soul unstirred
By the world's tumult ere the final day,
Follow the few and not the common herd.
I hear your answer, 'Brother, thou the way
Showest to others where full often thou
Thyself were lost and never more than now . . .²

²Trans. by W. D. Foulke

Petrarch made two visits to the monastery, one in 1347 and the other in 1353. The conversion and entrance into religion of this unique and well-loved brother touched his soul profoundly and exercised great power on the development of his thought and his life, at the same time impelling him to the exclusive love of solitude and contemplation. Hereafter, the poet derives happiness in communicating to his brother light on the state of his own soul, and in reassuring him that the good counsels of confession, recitation of prayers and renunciation of *consortium feminae*, given by Gherardo to Petrarch at the moment of separation, have not lain forgotten in an unfrequented cell of his mind. Perhaps his statements are born from a desire to please and satisfy the Carthusian monk who so lately had been his companion of debauch; perhaps Augustine has really had influence.

The visits to Montrieu were periods of unrestrained joy to Petrarch. He had long delighted in imagining his brother amid the grottos and the forests, with his simple robe, his easy sandals, his shaven head. He knew that Gherardo had found peace in the fasting, the hair-cloth, chastity, the love of the cross painted on the wall of his cell, in the prayers and nocturnal chants, in the simplicity of 'Christ's poor'. "I have entered into Paradise," said Petrarch, "and I have seen the angels of God on earth!" Everything charmed him, the romantic savage solitude of the place, the monastery and the church, the long silences, the chants of the 'religiosi', those nocturnal and diurnal Hours wherein his own penitent heart, in an ecstasy of adoration and self-mortification, drowned itself to the accents of the 'angelic psalmody'. His soul rejoiced when his body was offered the bed 'formed like a box', a repast of soup and meagre dishes, and the night around him dispelled by an odorous tallow candle. He enjoyed the 'charming and rapid' conversations he held with the monks who were all eager to speak with him; he in turn listened to their holy words like so many celestial oracles, attentive to all, avid to know and see everything. Having come to visit one brother, he said, he felt that he had found numerous ones. Judge then of his horror in hearing later that all of these new friends had died in the Great Plague of 1348, and that his brother alone survived! The appeal of the occurrence was romantic enough to override his horrified

speechlessness, and he writes to Gherardo with divine melancholia: "Thou hast assisted thy dying brothers and gathered their last words and kisses; thou hast washed their chilled bodies and draped the shroud about them with a pious and untiring zeal—even two and three in one day—and thou hast transported them away on thy shoulders." The episode had a terrific effect on him and on the religious evolution of his spirit, and by one more bond tied him to the conviction that his brother's entrance into religion had been divinely ordered. From this point onward, Petrarch could not conceive of religion except in terms of asceticism. For this he has at times been fallaciously called 'mystic'. In the Middle Age 'religion' and 'religious' connoted 'asceticism', not the union of the self with the divine current that is mysticism now. Whatever of the 'mystic' there may have been in Petrarch was practical and took the form of quietism.

So, the conclusion that may be drawn from this is perhaps that an affection for his brother, an opportune introduction to Saint Augustine, an ascent of Mount Ventoux and two appealing visits to the romantic wilderness of Montrieu, caused a love for religion to arise in his heart. Whether or not it was more solidly based upon outward, almost pagan aspects, or upon the inner, sturdier precepts, may be seen later.

III. PETRARCH AND AUGUSTINE

At the gateway of the Middle Ages, with the pagan glories cast behind him, stands Augustine, admitting freely that Cicero taught him how to escape from pyrrhonism in the practical certitude of moral judgments, that he had known and loved Virgil among the follies of his youth, and that the spirit's weakness against the flesh was enhanced by the intellectual weakness of skepticism which accompanied it invariably, a principle which thrust him directly into neo-platonic fields. For him the deity became in time the highest reality, embodying the shadows of creation in its beauty, swallowing the concept of the individual and of evil. For him love became a sin, because it lavished upon an animal the affection which was wholly the due of God. He saw the human will drugged by divine grace, or at least made superfluous, and he saw that flesh was dear if its price were a soul.

It has been noted that Petrarch could not think of religion except in terms of asceticism, because of his ingrained sympathy with it. Yet against the ascetic view the pagan half of him cried out. From the inner sympathy was born the fear of death and eternal torment that occasioned him such torture when he remembered all the monks dead at Montrieu; from the rebellion against it arose his absorption in antiquity, his conception that his own hand guided his life, his invective against the ecclesiastical corruption he saw at Avignon. And his tragedy is that though in his 'divided soul' he incarnated two irreconcilable eras of the human spirit, he attempts to prove that a concord between them may be possible.

The periphery of Augustine, the trend in him towards quietism (*id est* 'practical mysticism'), decadence and Orientalism, was perhaps the real net that caught and held the gentle soul of Petrarch. Theoretically he agrees with practically all of the saint's doctrine; his reason and the ascetic half of his soul fly to him. Therefore, in the *Secretum* he can allow the paramount claim of faith to order conduct, and agree that the soul is superior to the body, and that immortality gains easy victory over the things of earth. Only when Augustine prods the humanist in him by announcing that Petrarch's salvation may be endangered by an ideal devotion to a mortal woman and the love of earthly glory, does his soul show its other side and deny that these things are wrong. But it is half-hearted, since the rational Petrarch is ever uppermost when his pen writes Latin. The essential of Augustine wins the strife, and the fringe is defeated.

But not for long. Imagine the poet finding, in the *Civitas Dei*, the destruction of his entire and beloved Graeco-Roman world of culture, its religion, science and art all stripped of greatness through the shadiest of means. Emotionally he explodes when he views this incomparable work of destruction and sees all of his tradition dissolved as Augustine condemns the *civitas terrena*, the entire pagan world, as a measureless structure of sin. The outraged pagan again takes the ascendancy in Petrarch, and out of sheer spite in the face of the dead unassailable saint, he sits down to write another sonnet to the Canzoniere.

Or imagine him, reading in Augustine's polemic against Pelagius, Book IV:

But ought we then to search out the pleasures of the body, that Plato with so much truth calls the charms which evil makes use of to take us prisoner? The exhaustion of health, the alteration of the color, the prostration of the forces, dishonor, infamy—are not these truly the effects and the consequences of pleasure? The more man inflames himself in his transports, the more is he the enemy of philosophy . . . In the paroxysm of voluptuousness, what man would still be capable of attention, reason, or even of thought? But above all, what insatiable voluptuary would wish to prolong, night and day, this disorder of the sense that accompanies the madness of pleasure? Would not the intelligent man sooner desire that nature might have refused to him absolutely this fatal sensuality?

Yes, Petrarch concludes, this is right and sound. But then, stepping to the door of his retreat at Vacluse and wandering to the grotto of the fountain of the Sorgue to watch with Virgilian tenderness how the water, wonderfully dark in hue, welled up and everflowed impetuously, he remembers the hands of that country girl, hands that would have made an anchorite lascivious; the night being cool and perfect, he shuts his eyes and resigns himself to the call of his flesh.

The riddle is solved, perhaps. Petrarch wanted to be a Christian because he felt that not to be affronted his theory and intelligence, but like so many others, he could not resolve or control the truths his body spoke to him. Only the blind will fancy that the pagan altar-flame that burned in his heart was composed wholly of votive candles.

IV. PETRARCH AS HUMANIST

It is fate that Miniver Cheevy will exist in all ages, and in great probability the youths of Athens sighed for the vanished outlines of the race of heroes. Petrarch, not differing from the long tradition established for sensitive souls, felt out of place in the Italy of his time and longed for Rome. Before he knew the literature of the Golden Age, it was necessary that history be not a closed book to him. Through its talismanic powers he found that he

could live again in a day when the Forum was more than an imposing ruin. Out of this mystical philosophy of history, then was born his humanism. Without learning and study, his meditations before the ruins of Rome would certainly have been less profound than they were, for emotion made of memories, such as this, is eloquent only as its perceiver is penetrated with both poetry and erudition. The first is as necessary as the latter. Antiquity, ornate and compelling as it might be, never could have inspired in him that particular taste for the picturesque that awakened in him when the poetry of savage places and grandiose vistas confronted him. The seed of poetry was native to his soul.

Petrarch warred against people 'so disdainfully negligent, so frivolously curious', people who practised the false sciences of astrology, magic, alchemy and medicine (!) "Let us have", said he, "nothing but a simple and pure study of antiquity." Behind him were not the columns of a traditional school, unless perchance, all Latin classicism might be so considered; he did not follow any famous master, Cicero and Virgil being merely influences; his philological equipment was the result of his own private study, and certainly, the thing that amazes us today is his accurate knowledge of the chronology of the Roman era, and its order, when there was no history of the times available to him as a student. Yet, in spite of this independence, we must brand him with the name of imitator and call his a literature of imitation, remembering, however, that the transformation of scientific thought had of necessity to begin with the renovation of the literary form, and that Petrarch's imitation of the form of antiquity paved the way for the rare and vigorous thought that was to come. What seduced him in antique literature, says de Nolhac¹, was the character of work-of-art . . . For the first time in centuries, perfection of form decided the preference of a spirit. It is difficult to brand as imitator a man who in the fourteenth century could say "Aristotle has erred"; such a statement at that time was indeed epoch-making and revolutionary. The cynical, though, who forget the solid part of the man and refuse to see anything in him but the *poseur*, may be tempted to remark that since he was born after the tower of Babel fell, there might be reason enough for such a statement.

¹Pierre de Nolhac: *Pétrarque et l'Humanisme*, Paris, 1907. Vol. I, page II.

Certainly, had he known Plato well, one could predict that anything might have happened; as it was, the Platonic doctrines remained comfortably vague and indefinite to him, and reference to the Greek was surely passed off with a subtle and mysterious smile.

Petrarch would not be classified but as a 'poet'; he disdained all other terms. He knew law, but he was not a lawyer; he held various clerical offices but was no priest; he collected books for one and another rich patron, but he was not a librarian; he copied manuscripts, but he was not a copyist. And it has been a prevalent complaint that such humanistic labors stopped the work in the Italian vernacular, quenched many *Decamerons* and *Divine Comedies*, and set the premier intellects to the tasks of discovering manuscripts, compiling dictionaries and settling ancient texts. But such a task, the reappropriation of antiquity, when all the environs were drear under the deadening frosts of mediaeval custom and ecclesiastical prejudice, required an intellectual force equal to high creative power. Had these tireless gentlemen written creatively and without the enriching mellowing influence of antiquity, it is difficult to say if they would now be as well known as they are. Their postponement of the task would merely have kept life and thought static in the throes of mediaevalism and the church until other ambitious souls had set it free by performing these necessary labors.

Small matter to Petrarch that after him humanism might become an elegance, almost a dandyism, or that excess of individualism might give birth to license, or excess of the critical spirit to skepticism; he had seen that the Italian mind was capable of surrendering itself, without reserve, to classical antiquity, and that the Italian spirit could absorb the classical and reproduce it with artistic fidelity. He had done his best, and in every sense may his labors truly be called Promethean.

by E. K. Brown

THE IMMEDIATE PRESENT IN CANADIAN LITERATURE

THE present state of Canadian literature is economically unsound. No poet or critic or even novelist could live decently on the Canadian sales of his works. No dramatist could exist at all on the proceeds of the Canadian performances of his plays. Three alternatives are before the literary artist who has had the doubtful luck to be born in Canada. He may, like Grant Allen or Bliss Carman, emigrate and become a part of another culture. Or he may, like Mazo de la Roche or Morley Callaghan, become, economically at least, a part of another culture without emigrating. This is a precarious thing to do and it is doubtful whether it can be successful, artistically, or economically, in the long run. The third alternative is to earn one's living in an un-literary, or semi-literary, occupation and to create only in one's leisure. Such a solution was permanently satisfactory for Charles Lamb in the office of the East India Company or for Joris Karl Huysmans in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In North America the tempo of commercial and financial life is too swift and too exhausting to permit of such achievements as Lamb's unless the artist be a man of prodigious vitality. The writing of Canadian literature, then, goes on under economic difficulties almost overpowering.

Canadian attitudes to Canadian literature are also unsound and disabling. There is, first of all, the attitude of the small but precious group of Canadians of cosmopolitan culture. These people are to be found in small numbers in almost every city or large town in Canada and in somewhat larger numbers in our musical, dramatic, political, and educational centres. Nowhere are they powerful enough to exert an open influence. Nowhere do they determine the form or the flow of local life. These citizens

of the world care for good books; they read them as closely as they are read in London or New York; they are, many of them, excellent judges of literary values. They do not care particularly where a book is published. Many of them have never read *Jalna*, some of them know Morley Callaghan only by vulgar report, very few of them knew even the name of the man whom I esteem our greatest living poet, Abraham Klein. There is, perhaps, a drop or two of hostility in their attitude to Canadian literature. So often at the suggestion of enthusiastic friends have they wasted an evening with a mediocre Canadian novel or volume of verse!

In direct contrast to the attitude of this group is that of another, scarcely, if at all, larger, the group of the truculent advocates of Canadian literature. This is a more coherent group. "Nothing is more pleasant to man than incorporation", said Lord Shaftesbury the essayist. The members of this group are incorporated in many local and national societies; and they have an open if not very extensive influence upon the Canadian public. A colleague of mine, addressing one such group a year or two ago, ventured to suggest that our lyric poets, of the last generation, Carman, Lampman, and Roberts, were not quite the equals of the masters of English romantic poetry in whose school they learned most of their best lessons. He was taken to task as a traitor. Now anyone who believes that our lyric poets are the equals of Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth will believe anything. In Lewis Carroll's phrase, he will believe as many as seven impossible things before breakfast. It would, however, be a grievous injustice to dismiss the advocates of Canadian literature as merely or mainly unreasonable. Their tone is the result of a natural and justified resentment of the somewhat scornful indifference of our cosmopolitans and, even more, of the attitudes of the third group now to be considered.

This third group is the general reading public in Canada. If the present state of Canadian literature is economically unsound, as I asserted at the beginning of this paper and as I could easily prove if proof were necessary, the chief responsibility lies here, with what Virginia Woolf calls, with no hint of disparagement, the common readers, the immense number of men and women whose main concern in life is not with literature. The Canadian public is not hostile to Canadian literature but it is indifferent. It does

not know good prose from spineless sprawling prose, and therefore it endures the Canadian press. It does not know great drama from infantile melodrama and hoodlum comedy, and therefore it endures the English and American movies. It does not know competent and stirring painting from sentimental wash of color and therefore it endures the pictures sold in our emporia. The public of the American Middle West and Far West is much the same. American critics, attempting to explain the aesthetic insensitivity of this public, invoke the concept of the frontier, evolved a generation ago by Professor Turner. Most Canadians live at some distance, physical and mental, from the frontier; but their attitude to life has still many elements natural to the frontiersman. Attitudes to life change much more deliberately than the material conditions of life. There is always what the sociologists call a cultural lag. Now, the material conditions at the frontier place a premium on action, physical strength, will, patience. Not only was there no function for the artist on the frontier; the desires in people which appeal to the artist for satisfaction, the desire for beauty, the desire for knowledge of life in general, the desire for the representation of complex and subtle relationships between individuals, were out of place on the frontier and tended to atrophy. The material conditions of the frontier have passed away from most Canadian towns and cities, but we have not attained the balance of mind which exists at the centres of civilization. We are, most of us, in the frontiersman's attitude to literature. Literature is a luxury. The reading of books is primarily a means of killing time, a substitution for a cigar, or a rugby game, or a movie. The cultivated and observant mind of Mr. Louis Bromfield states the North American cultural dilemma in these words:

Life is hard for our children. It isn't as simple as it was for us. Their grandfathers were pioneers and the same blood runs in their veins, only they haven't a frontier any longer, they stand . . . these children of ours . . . with their backs toward this rough-hewn middle west and their faces set toward Europe and the East and they belong to neither. They are lost somewhere between.

Most Canadians have not yet squarely turned their backs on the frontier, but they are turning them. When they have done so they will begin, as so many Americans have already done, to perceive

the great and indispensable function of the artist, the priest of truth and beauty, and I venture to prophesy great artists will then be born.

In our present phase, in which the artist is not an integral part of the national life, the attitude of sincere and profound writers will and must be one of protest and revolt. The few living masters of Canadian literature dare not accept the present mould of Canadian life. One of the greatest of them, and one of the most reflective, Frederick Philip Grove, remarked a year ago in the *University of Toronto Quarterly* that "as far as the general public goes Canada is a non-conductor with regard to any kind of spiritual current." That is the gravest indictment that any artist can make against a community, for, as a great American expatriate wrote to James Russell Lowell, the artist's first need is "an audience which can understand what is good and what is bad." Without such "a sounding board", he continues, "the heart grows into stone". The hearts of our Canadian masters have every excuse for stoniness: but the fact is that the best of them are turbulent and indignant rather than petrified.

I should serve no useful end by passing in rapid review the names and works of the worthy Canadian writers of to-day. I prefer to select three writers who appear to me to justify hopes for Canadian literature and who exemplify the attitude of protest and revolt in the three literary types which seem to me the richest and most significant in Canada to-day,—the novel, the lyric, and the critical essay.

II.

Any serious reader of Canadian fiction of the past decade will admit that its three masters are Mazo de la Roche, Frederick Philip Grove, and Morley Callaghan. I shall pass over Mr. Grove despite my high regard for his fiction. His best work seems to me to lie outside the novel in such books as *Over Prairie Trails* and *The Turn of the Year*, books in which his bleak, grim power is extremely impressive. I shall also pass over Miss de la Roche. I believe that *Jalna* is the most neatly constructed novel ever written by a Canadian, and I also believe that in that novel and the sequel *Whiteoaks of Jalna* the grandmother Whiteoaks is the most

memorable character created by a Canadian artist. For two reasons, however, I prefer to deal with Mr. Callaghan. The Jalna novels, the best of Miss de la Roche's work, are in their manner somewhat antiquated, written in the way consecrated by Thomas Hardy, and in their matter somewhat foreign, dealing as they do with an English family curiously self-contained, and living in southern Ontario much as they might live in the English Midlands. In an absolute sense neither of these peculiarities is a defect; but in an examination of tendencies in the present literature of Canada it is natural to choose something more characteristic of the present and more characteristic of Canada.

That something is the work of Morley Callaghan. He is no less bleak than Mr. Grove, but his bleakness is less frankly revealed. His characters swear and drink and misconduct themselves in an extremely brutal, in an oddly inarticulate, way, like people deadened by a misery too great to be borne. That misery is the mere fact of being alive. If they had the analytical mind of George Eliot they would say, as she did, that in their birth an irreparable injury was done them. They are ordinary folk, however, and they merely feel what George Eliot defined. Such characters do not make good material for a full-length novel, unless that novel is to be sensational melodrama. Mr. Callaghan is too modern, that is to say, too serious, too austere, to tolerate melodrama. He has wisely confined his novels to a remarkable brevity. Still it is in his novelettes and his short stories that he has done his best work. The novelette *In His Own Country* seems to me to be the very best of Mr. Callaghan; and on it I wish to pause.

It is an episode in the life of Bill, a young journalist in a town on the shore of Georgian Bay. Bill is very ignorant and very ambitious. One day he reads in a Sunday Supplement of the achievement of Saint Thomas Aquinas in reconciling the philosophy of Aristotle with the dogmas of the Christian Church. "Bill understood readily that Saint Thomas was the superman of the Middle Ages." It occurred to Bill that "a man like himself, willing to work hard, might become the Saint Thomas of to-day" if he could "make a plan of different fields of science and show definitely that it could become one fine system in accordance with a religious scheme". Bill loses interest in the card games and movies

which had occupied him and his wife Flora in the evenings. Flora, completely unable to comprehend what Bill is doing, is slowly alienated. Bill loses his job, neglects his wife, and, unforgivable sin, becomes in the view of his townsmen an eccentric, a "nut". His wife leaves him, his health gives way, and still his progress with Christian theology and the principles of science is negligible. The story ends with Bill an invalid, his wife returning to nurse him and assuring the priest's housekeeper "You may be sure he'll not bother again with studyin' and too many books."

Even if one does not inquire into the ultimate meaning of *In His Own Country*, the novelette is a striking achievement, a life-like record of a Canadian town. It is for its deeper meaning, however, that I have chosen it as a sample of Morley Callaghan. Bill, with his pathetically grandiose ambition, is an emblem of the creative spirit, and Bill's relation with his wife, and his community, is an emblem of the artist's relation with Canada. Even if Bill's wife and the townsmen of that little railway junction on Georgian Bay had known what it was Bill wanted to do, what was the nature of the vast and intricate system evolved by Saint Thomas, what were the issues between religion and science, his task would still have been an arduous one. The task of the great creative and critical minds is always arduous, whether it is carried on in a Canadian town or in the British Museum or the halls of the Sorbonne. But after all, as Emerson cheerfully says, "Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books" of theirs. The history of thought and of art is full of the stories of men who grew up and lived in remote villages, and yet added to the world's store of knowledge and beauty irreplaceable treasures. They have not, any of them, lived in Canadian villages. There, admirably hidden behind Mr. Callaghan's scrupulously dispassionate presentation of an episode in the life of Bill, whom his wife and his townsmen deemed a "nut", is the proper gesture of protest and revolt against the present form of Canadian life.

III.

Among critics and in the reading public at large there is no unanimous, or even current, opinion of the relative importance of

the dozen worthy Canadian poets of the day. Our important poets, it seems to me, are of two kinds: those who work in the manner and with the matter of Lampman and Carman, and those who, feeling in themselves moods unknown to the gentle minds of Lampman and Carman, seek a matter and manner more modern, new to Canada, or in one or two instances, almost absolutely new. It is in poets of this latter sort that one finds most clearly revealed the tendencies of the immediate present. Among these poets I single out as the most original, Wilson Macdonald, E. J. Pratt, Dorothy Livesay, and Abraham Klein. Wilson Macdonald the most versatile of the four, seems to me imperfectly modern: side by side with strident scornful poems, comparable with the work of Sandburg and Masters, are suave and graceful lyrics which might have been the work of Carman, for whom Mr. Macdonald has a tender admiration. E. J. Pratt, born on the rock-bound Newfoundland coast, shows his disdain of contemporary Canadian life by escaping in his greatest poems to the sea and to the primitive immensities of the emotions it nourishes and satisfies in those who live on and by it. Like Mazo de la Roche, he is not fully a part of Canadian culture; and in the rare poems in which he deals with modern life on the land he lacks, so it appears to me, both the emotional force and the fierce blasting rhythms, which make him, in such a poem as *The Cachalot*, one of the great poets of the sea. The work of Dorothy Livesay is no less original than his. She has found in the lyrics of Emily Dickinson and Elinor Wylie, or perhaps simply in a mind akin to theirs, something which has no precedent in Canadian poetry, an oddity of imagery, an artfully simple ease of expression, and a startling alternation of ecstasy and cynicism.

More significant than any of these three is, in my opinion, Abraham Klein, whose poetry is so original, that no publisher has as yet brought out a volume of his verse. His work must be sought in collections such as *The American Caravan*, and in such magazines of the *avant-garde* as *The Canadian Forum*. There is but one contemporary poet whose work Mr. Klein's resembles—T. S. Eliot; and, I imagine, nine out of ten of the younger poets and careful students of poetry in Great Britain, in the United States, and in Canada, would rate Mr. Eliot's poetry higher than that of

any other written in our time. Mr. Klein is in no significant sense an echo of Mr. Eliot. In the first place Mr. Klein is a Jew. His culture seems to me to be broader and more intense than that of any other Canadian poet; but in that culture the central element is Jewish. In his great poem on Spinoza he finds words and images and cadences for the philosopher's prayer which recall not the Authorized Version but the literal truth of the Old Testament's art:

The wind through the almond trees spreads the fragrance of thy robes; the turtle dove twittering offers diminutives of thy love; at the rising of the sun I behold thy countenance.

Yea, and in the crescent moon, thy little finger's finger-nail . . .

On the swift wings of a star, even on the numb legs of a snail, Thou dost move, O Lord . . .

A babe in swaddling clothes laughs at the sunbeams on the door's lintel: the sucklings play with thee; with thee Kopernik holds communion through a lense.

One of the chief sources of Mr. Eliot's power to move us is his recognition of the city as the best material for the poetry of a civilization which more and more centers in vast confused urban conglomerations. The city is more real to most of us than

The silence that is in the starry skies
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

Mr Klein, too, is a poet of the city. After Judaism, Montreal is the most powerful factor in his work. *The Diary of Abraham Segel, Poet* open with these lines:

No cock rings matins of the dawn for me;
No morn in russet mantle clad,
Reddens my window-pane; no melodye

Maken the smalle fowles nigh my bed . . .

No triple braggadocio of the cock,
But the alarm of a dollar clock,
Ten sonorous rivetters at heaven's gate;
Steel udders rattled by milkmen; horns
Cheerily rouse me on my Monday morns.

In the same poem he presents the street car in which he rides to work; the newspaper "he reads over his neighbor's shoulder"; the

fellow workers at the factory; the boss and his fatuous wife; the Northeastern Café and the food he eats there; dinner at the family table; the amusements of the city; and finally the escape in the company of his sweetheart to the top of Mount Royal when:

They see again, the eyes which once were blear,
His heart gets speech and is no longer dumb . . .
Upon the mountain top Abe Segal walks,
Hums old-time songs, of old-time poets talks,
Brilliant his shoes with dew, his eyes with stars.

All this is far removed from Mr. Eliot's view of the city, the view of a jaded, fastidious cosmopolitan, for whom London or Vienna or Alexandria is repulsive merely by its miscellaneous vulgarities, its filthy sights, its raucous sounds, its total consecration to materialism. Mr. Klein's poetry of Montreal is not cosmopolitan but, to take his own epithet, "industrial". The poet is a part of the vulgarity, he cannot escape the filth, he is a victim, in body and intelligence, if not in spirit, of the materialism. His protests are more vehement, his pictures more intimate, since he is infinitely more exposed to what he scorns and hates.

Mr. Klein is in full revolt from Canadian life. In Abe Segal he gives us a symbol of the creative spirit at war with its circumstances, a symbol more powerful than Mr. Callaghan's Bill, for Abe Segal is a conscious accuser as well as a victim. His revolt finds fierce and highly poetical expression in the poem,—a companion piece to the *Diary*,—*Soirée of Velvel Kleinburger*. Here the bemused Velvel, a symbol of the weakness of the worker, reflects on the Canadian form of society, as he fools aimlessly with a pack of cards. The misery of the poor; the hypocrisy of the rich; the chasm between them so difficult to bridge; the desire of the poor for what the rich flaunt: such are the reflections of Velvel Kleinburger, poor in brains as well as in dollars, envious of the luxurious motors and the Paris-gowned and diamond-jewelled women of the rich. And the bitter voice of the poet breaks in upon his reflections:

Hum a hymn of sixpence
A table-ful of cards
Fingers slowly shuffling
Ambiguous rewards,
When the pack is opened
The pauper once more gave
His foes the kings and aces
And dealt himself the knave.

There is Mr. Klein's comment on the wild hopes of the utopists who go about persuading the millions of Velvets that they have a technique for reshaping Canadian society and settling permanent happiness upon every corner of the land. Mr. Klein knows too much of the mainsprings of life to lose his head: *his* heart is in the house of mourning.

IV.

The outlook is brighter for our poetry and fiction than for our criticism; and since to write great criticism supposes culture, as well as large information and excellent taste, the plight of our Canadian criticism need not surprise us. Culture is not a national god in Canada. [By culture I mean nothing exotic, but only the knowledge and love of the best that has been thought and said, a recognition of the excellent and a resolution to rest satisfied with nothing less, a liberation from the vulgar, the superficial, the provincial. Culture leads one to care more for Lear and the Fool upon the blasted heath than for any tear-sodden film from Hollywood or Elstree, to care more for the last cantos of the *Paradiso* than for the hymns in any of our hymnals, to care more for the sharp, chastening laughter of Molière and Shaw than for the aimless guffawings that make the radio a nuisance. By caring I mean not simply saying that Shakespeare is better than Joan Crawford or the Bennett girls, or Shaw better than Ed. Wynne and Amos and Andy, but feeling that Shakespeare and Shaw are a day-to-day necessity and the others are not. Catch a man hurrying to a cinema or reaching to turn on his radio and he will certainly say that Shakespeare, (if not Shaw), is about the greatest artist in the world's history; but it is not with Shakespeare that he intends to spend the evening. To prefer Shakespeare to the radio and the movies for the evening's leisure is to invite the label "highbrow". An educated man need not, I admit, be a highbrow. There is an alternative,—he may be a traitor.] We have a reasonable number of scholar-critics, who address a limited international audience, and whose importance is international rather than national. During the past few years our scholar-critics have published important books on subjects as diverse as Plato and Heine, the English lyric and the plays of Henry James.

A scholar-critic may have a powerful impact upon the national culture in one of two ways: he may evolve a new critical method which others can then apply to national problems, as Taine did in his history of English literature, or he may devote his scholarship, as most of our historians do, to the study of Canadian culture. No Canadian has, to my knowledge, made an important change in the methods of criticism, nor has any of our scholar-critics, except Professor James Cappon in his elaborate study of Bliss Carman, written a book on a literary Canadian subject which could be compared favorably with the books on Plato or Heine or the others instanced in their company. The primary responsibility of our scholar-critics is international; and it is no reproach to them, if it is a matter for our regret, that they habitually address an international audience.

Another reason for the poverty of our criticism claims mention here. As Mr. Norris Hodgins remarks in the excellent introduction to his recent collection *Some Canadian Essays*: "Essays are rarely written in bookfuls." Essays flourish where literary periodicals flourish; and literary periodicals do not flourish in Canada. How many of Mr. Paul Elmer More's essays would have remained unwritten had he not edited the *New York Nation*? or of Mr. Middleton Murry's, had he not edited *The Adelphi*, or even of Mr. T. S. Eliot's, without his *Criterion* as a platform? We have no periodicals of importance in which literature is the sole concern, or even the admittedly chief concern. The periodical which seems to me to have done most for the erection and diffusion of critical standards in Canada is *The Canadian Forum*; I dare not enlarge upon that complimentary judgment since for the past three of its thirteen years of life I have been a member of its editorial board. It is in the number of its writers that I should expect to find the best of our critics: and the critic I shall single out for comment was in fact a member of the *Forum* committee from its inception until the present year—Mr. Barker Fairley. In speaking of him I shall not suffer the embarrassment incident to praising a colleague academic or editorial, since, after twenty years in Canada, Mr. Fairley recently resigned his professorship in German at University College, Toronto, (and concurrently his editorship of the *Forum*) to accept the chair of German at Man-

chester. Mr. Fairley is a scholar-critic as well as a commentator on Canadian culture. His recent book on Goethe's Poetry takes rank with the best contributions to international culture written in Canada. It falls, however, far outside the scope of this paper in which Mr. Fairley's Canadian importance is what matters.

"Whatever the American men of genius are", says an English critic, "they are not young gods making a new world." Similarly, Mr. Fairley's attitude to Canadian literature may be expressed thus: "The creative spirits of Canada are not the fierce enthusiasts one would expect, revealing the violent beauties of the Canadian landscape and of the Canadian struggle to make a nation." He complains of the lack of intensity in the Canadian:

Sitting daily in the street-car I scan the faces of my compatriots but never a sign do I see of rapture or despair . . . of course if I stay with these countenances I take them for granted, but a trip across the water and a few weeks sojourn among those volatile European faces disaccustoms me again and I return, hungry for the signs of emotional experience in the human features around me. This illogical desire lasts for days and days till at last it dies of starvation and I settle down again, defeated rather than reconciled, and resign myself to the conviction that we have all agreed to play a perpetual game of poker.

Americans of cosmopolitan experience, Henry James and W. C. Brownwell and Edith Wharton, confess to just such disappointments with their countrymen. It would seem that all we North Americans pipe our energy into our work and leave our personal life a shell over a great emptiness. And in a more bitter protest against the complacency of the official eulogists of Canadian literature, Mr. Fairley exclaims against "the notion that if only there is enough soft soap and back scratching all will be well with Canadian literature", a notion the exact opposite of the truth which is that the kind of author we need is an Aldous Huxley, one of "the Mephistophelean type, who will dispel our mists and mirages and let us see this great country of ours—excuse me, it slipped out!—in its true and therefore its best light." Here Mr. Fairley voices the attitude of all who care and hope for Canadian culture; so different a mind as Dr. Lorne Pierce's expresses itself with at least equal vehemence: "The last enemy to be conquered

is the rhapsodist, the indiscriminating braggart who deals wholesale in fleece-lined caressive garments of praise". I have done Mr. Fairley an injustice if I have implied that in his rebellion against the attitudes of the Canadian public and the panegyrical enthusiasts of Canadian literature he is merely a specimen of the cosmopolitan Canadian. His hot advocacy of the Group of Seven in the early dangerous days when these painters were commonly regarded as a menace or a laughing-stock, and his immense sympathy with the work of such writers as Mr. Grove, Mr. Klein and the late Raymond Knister, are absolute proof of his difference from the cosmopolitans. Like Mr. Klein and Mr. Callaghan he looks at Canadian life through his own eyes: like them also he is a rebel against it.

So rapid a survey as this requires no conclusion. Instead of a conclusion I wish to add a foot-note. I do not claim that the great artist is always and everywhere essentially a rebel against his community. The greatest artists, a Dante, a Leonardo, a Goethe, a Shakespeare, express not merely a personal attitude to life, but the attitude of the best of their community and generation. What I claim is, merely, that here and now the Canadian artist is properly in rebellion against the Canadian community: that his rebellion is in some sort indispensable to his intellectual and artistic integrity; and that the guilt for his rebellion lies not with him but with the community of which he is, by its own tacit wish, no organic part.

by Bernard E. Meland

KINSMEN OF THE WILD

RELIGIOUS MOODS IN MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

THE temper of modern American poetry could hardly be described as religious in the sense that characterized nineteenth century poetry, or, for that matter, that seems to characterize contemporary German verse. Most of our modern poets, as Untermeyer has said, "have shaken themselves free of the tag-end moralizing of our literary doctrinaires". Like the artists of our day, they have been set free "to look candidly at the world" they live in and to voice their moods and observations with utter frankness. "Poetry has swung back to actuality, to heartiness and lustihood".¹ Therein lies the religious quality of its mood—its actuality.

The late Gerald Birney Smith once remarked that few people in this modern world have as yet become emotionally oriented in the universe, the reason being that the traditions which, for the most part, have shaped and dominated our emotional life, have been of an otherworldly temper. Men have sung so long the words of the hymn, "*I'm but a stranger here, Heav'n is my home*" that their frame of mind has settled permanently in that mood. As a result, there has grown up among us a sense of strangeness toward the natural world. As long as this emotional barrier persists, the religious man faces a serious dilemma, for until he does become emotionally oriented in the universe, his religion can never be genuinely integrated in the affairs of the natural world. The stubborn fact remains that where man's emotions are, there his religion is also.

I have often thought, as I pondered this matter, what does it mean to be emotionally oriented in the universe? Does it mean eulogizing sunsets, revelling in the sights of nature, or senti-

¹Louis Untermeyer, *American Poetry Since 1900*.

mentalizing over creatures of the wild? Was Wordsworth oriented in the universe? Was Emerson? Few men have spoken more feelingly of nature than Emerson. Yet, there is something strangely unreal in his words. As I read them a feeling of illusion comes over me and I am compelled to ask, is he talking about the world of nature as it empirically exists, or about nature idealized? Does he really know the world of nature any more genuinely than the New England theologians who denounced it? Has he not projected his own idealism into nature? All these queries lead me to conclude that what Emerson saw was not trees, lakes and planets, but the "Over-Soul" incarnated.

Orientation in the universe means more than a metaphysical rationalization of our relation to it. It means vastly more than an emotional enthusiasm for the beauties in nature. It implies above all, acknowledgment of man's intimate relations with the life of nature, recognition that he is the child of earth, born of its processes, nourished at its sources, sustained and eventually dissolved by its own movements.

This sense of at-homeness in the universe is rare to-day. It is a mood difficult to achieve for it involves transitions that seem perilous. Apart from the few who have worked their way through to a frankly naturalistic philosophy of life, and those who, by temperament, have come upon it normally, men and women of the modern world still turn restlessly away from the arms of Mother Earth, seeking security and contentment in worlds beyond. Somehow this world is not enough. Modern poetry, having *swung back to actuality*, may help us to achieve this sense of at-homeness.

Four religious moods seem apparent to me in the verses of certain modern American poets. There is the mood of integrity, sheer unadorned, elemental honesty in seeing things and events as they exist and happen. This is the basic mood pervading the poetry of Carl Sandburg. Boynton, commenting upon Carl Sandburg, in *Some Contemporary Americans*, relates an incident recounting the shock with which an official in an old, eastern public library read Sandburg's *Chicago Poems*, particularly the opening lines, "Hog Butcher for the World". One readily understands the librarian's resentment at having to include these "brutal" words in the category of poetry for conventional standards have gen-

erally intended the term poetry to connote delicate and ethereal sentiments set to rhythm. But Sandburg's is a seeing that penetrates pretty peripheries. This opening poem on Chicago, as Boynton has said, "is a glorification of muscular power honestly used. Chicago is a tall, bold slugger set vividly against the little soft cities".

Yet, in fairness to Sandburg, one must add, again appropriating Boynton's observations, that Sandburg "does not sing one tune alone or in only one key", which further attests his integrity. His delicate depiction:

The fog comes
On little cat feet.
It sits looking
Over harbor and city
On silent haunches
And then moves on.

is characteristic of what may seem to be another aspect of Sandburg's poetic temper. I do not think so. It does indicate the scope of his power of expression, for in language he is capable of both crescendo and diminuendo. But this variability in vocabulary and mood is apiece with his integrity. He reports what he sees. He sees ugliness as ugliness and describes it so. He sees delicacy and beauty as such and portrays them in language consonant with their character. "So as a poet he lives in the midst of the great spaces, but as a poet, too, he lives in the presence of beauty, and he finds it on every side in the manifold moods of earth and sky and sea, in the innocence of childhood, in honest labor, in homely ways and homely places".⁸ I believe with Boynton that "Carl Sandburg treats life frankly because on the whole he likes it and believes in it . . . To him life with all its ugliness is touched with beauty and filled with solemnity". Herein lies the richness of his integrity. Sandburg is so free from the sins common among realists. His realism never approaches sordidness or sensualness. His is a rugged realism. Salt sea winds and high mountain air blow through his lines. Neither does he fall into moroseness. He faces life affirmatively. He takes life with a head-up, face-to-the-wind attitude. There is almost a sweetness in the spirit with which he deals with people and with common things.

⁸P. H. Boynton, *Some Contemporary Americans*, University of Chicago Press, 1925. p. 68-9.

He accepts them for what they are, observes them, understands them, but rarely measures them. He knows the *Grave Digger*, the *Dynamiter*, the *Ice Handler*, the *Plowboy*, the *Junkman* and the *Singing Nigger*. He has looked at *Hydrangeas* and growing *Grass*. He has stood before steel mills, *Subways* and crowds in *A Halsted Street Car*. He has peered over whole cities, cornfields and prairies. He has watched rivers, the *Summer Stars*, winding roads and the seasons changing. Each reveals a world of meaning to him for he sees them from *their* inside. In their commonplace setting he sees them "filled with solemnity". Reading Sandburg's poetry or living in his presence for an hour brings one closer to the core of things.

Another religious mood is the one discerned in Oppenheim's poetic symphony, *The Sea*, and more particularly in his sonnet, *To The Perilous Open*,—the mood of adventure, agreeable to change, variety and indefinite openness in life. Its opening lines might be designated a critique of absolutism: "We that are the very waters of change, wearied, seek the unchanging. We want a rock under our feet—A rock of God, a rock of institutions, a rock of indissoluble marriage. The Absolute". It makes very little difference to us, the poet continues, what the nature of that rock is: it may be threatening with decay, it may be exploiting our good, it may even be inherently corrupt, "betraying our feet". "There will we stand, there will we suffer: our Rock!"

"But I—I will to my own, to the kin of my spirit", declares the poet.

I, the waters of change, will give myself to Life,
that sea in flux,
To the vast variety, to the perilous open, to the
stinging salt:
Strength must one have to swim: and I shall grow
strong with the sea.

I call this mood religious because it suggests readiness to adapt to the ways of the universe as we know them today. It evokes willingness to integrate one's self in the movement of life, and to find satisfaction in questing, endless and answerless though that quest may be. It stimulates eagerness to cope with change, uncertainty and relativity in which our world abounds. This is the temper of the modern man's religious quest—a readiness to respond "to the perilous open".

What is there religious in such a mood? Very little, indeed, if by religion one implies certainty in the absolute sense. But if instead of a religion of certainty, he implies a religion of discovery, then it is rich in spiritual zest. For, as John Dewey has said, "Faith in the varied possibilities of diversified experience is attended with the joy of constant discovery and of constant growing".⁴ This doubtless, is the mood that inspired Untermeyer's *Prayers*.

Ever insurgent let me be,
Make me more daring than devout;
From sleek contentment keep me free,
And fill me with a buoyant doubt.

There is a half-way mood such as is found in Donald Williams' sonnet, *The Watch*, which turns this questfulness into an experience of despair. Recognizing the existing uncertainty in men's world, the poet clings doubtfully, yet expectantly, to the hope of finding a port. Tragically he records their plight:

The blind seas break against our homeless prow,
The little folk are sleeping, berth by berth,
Or move with fretful moans and slumbrous mirth.
We restless tread the dreary decks, and bow
To empty gales, who serve the ancient vow.
The dark winds shake the shrouds: their salty dearth
Is dried upon our doubtful lips. What worth
Are vigils down the vacant waves we plow?
The Deep is void before; and what comes after
The cold high glory of the Watch we keep?
Our eyes are blurred from questioning the night:
Our bitter lips forget the taste of laughter.
They sleep, then, wisely, smiling in their sleep:—
We have not found a Port, nor any light.⁵

Commenting upon these lines, Henry Nelson Wieman has said, "Religion is the cold high glory of the watch. If it does not find a port nor any light, it is still religion. If it does, so much the better".⁶ This comment further reveals the half-way state of the poet's mood. The ship at sea, seeking a port or a light is still the religious mind seeking the absolute,—a Rock! Discerning ceaseless change in life impels him only to restlessly "tread the dreary decks" and to utter "What worth are vigils down the vacant waves we plow?" Contrast this restless mood with that of Oppen-

⁴ *Living Philosophies*, (Collective Work) Simon and Schuster, N. Y. 1931, pp. 27-28.

⁵ From Wieman's *Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, Macmillan.

⁶ *Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, Macmillan, 1927. Pp. 144.

heim's, who, reconciled to change and uncertainty, buoyantly declares, "I . . . will give myself to Life, that sea in flux, to the vast variety, to the perilous open". Or again, contrast the mood of despair in Williams' words, "The Deep is void before; and what comes after the cold high glory of the Watch we keep?" with the calm and confident attitude of another, though more prosaic sage of the new spirit, John Dewey, who, when voicing the same insight, simply says, "Search for a single, inclusive good is doomed to failure", and then moves beyond disillusionment to assert that "Such happiness as life is capable of comes from the full participation of all our powers in the endeavor to wrest from each changing situation of experience its own full and unique meaning." For the one, the fact that the "Deep is void before" causes his "bitter lips to forget the taste of laughter"; for the other, "the breakdown of traditional ideas is an opportunity" to live more genuinely and joyfully in the environing world which he has more truly and honestly discerned. Oppenheim and Dewey have gone the full way of the mood of adjustment; Williams has stopped halfway.

When this half-way mood goes the full length of despair, it may find reconciliation in the mood which Bertrand Russell has voiced in *A Free Man's Worship*, particularly those tragic lines:

The life of Man is a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long.

One by one as they march, our comrades vanish from our sight, seized by the silent orders of omnipotent Death.

Very brief is the time in which we can help them, in which their happiness or misery is decided.

Be it ours to shed sunshine on their path, to lighten their sorrows by the balm of sympathy, to give them the pure joy of a never-tiring affection, to strengthen failing courage, to instill faith in hours of despair.

Let us not weigh in grudging scales their merits and demerits, but let us think only of their need—of the sorrows, the difficulties, perhaps the blindness, that make the misery of their lives; let us remember that they are fellow sufferers in the same darkness, actors in the same tragedy with ourselves.

This mood is prevalent among present-day American poets.

¹*Living Philosophies*. Simon and Schuster, N. Y., 1931. 27.

Instead of taking refuge in a social idealism, however as Russell apparently has done, more frequently the American poet turns his realism to a pose of amusive detachment, as in Robert Frost's *Fire and Ice* in which the poet musingly contemplates the alternatives, burning or freezing, as pleasing methods of bringing the world to an end. This same tantalizing sophistication appears in Oliver Herford's verse, *Earth*. Here the significance, or rather the insignificance, of the end of the world is contemplated. In an instant, as the earth falls into the sun, the poet comments mockingly, "every trace of the little crawling things: ants, philosophers and lice, cattle, cockroaches and kings, beggars, millionaires and mice", all as one shrivel from off its face. As it comes through space in a hissing, headlong flight, who knows, chides the poet, "but at the same instant from some planet far, a child may watch us and exclaim: 'See the pretty shooting star.'"

Choosing between a mood of buoyancy, sophistication or despair is perhaps a matter of temperament. Facts affect people differently. They may inspire, they may harden, or they may break the spirit through disillusionment. Orientation in the universe will doubtless affect people similarly: it may lead to the mood of reluctant resignation to tragic outcome; on the other hand, with some, as in Oppenheim's sonnets, it may take the course of eager adaptation to what seems to be, not only the way of the universe, but the way unto man's own fulfillment. "Strength must I have to swim: and I shall grow strong with the sea".

A third religious mood in modern American poetry, somewhat akin to the second and blending with it, is the readiness to meet death unafraid. With some, it is again a mood of reluctant reconciliation, as in Elinor Wylie's *Confession of Faith*, or Sara Teasdale's two poems, *I Shall Not Care*, and *The Flight*. In other poets there is a heartiness in their anticipation of death, as in Alan Seeger's familiar lines, *I Have a Rendezvous with Death*. This poem is expressive, not only of a passing mood, but of the very spirit of Seeger's total life, brief as it was. Like Oppenheim, he drank deeply of life's currents as they flowed by. Rather, to state it more aptly, he plunged into those waters and swam along vigorously with them. He entered the war, for example, as William Archer has said, "because he felt war to be one of the supreme ex-

**Mysticism and Logic*, Longmans.

periences of life". The fullness with which he experienced the war as a phase of life is reflected in his letters to his mother, written from Toulouse. War brought to him, not merely drab routine, noise and blood; but

A lovely open field on the end of the ridge behind the barracks, yellow cornfields, vineyards, harvest fields where the workers and their teams can be seen moving about in tiny figures,—poplars, little hamlets and church towers and far away to the South the blue line of the Pyrenees, the high peaks capped with snow.

"But nature to me", he adds, "is not only hills and blue skies and flowers, but the universe, the totality of things, reality as it most obviously presents itself to us; and in this universe strife and sternness play as big a part as love and tenderness and cannot be shirked by one whose will it is to rule his life in accordance with the cosmic forces he sees in play about him".⁹

Death to Alan Seeger was a part of "this reality as it most obviously presents itself". Whether at "some disputed barricade", "on some scarred slope of battered hill" or "at midnight in some flaming town"—in all of these circumstances he calmly recognized "I have a rendezvous with death . . . and to my pledged word am true, I shall not fail that rendezvous."

Earlier in his career, before grim death faced him so realistically, Seeger put down his philosophy of death in these words:

Flowerlike I hope to die as flowerlike was my birth.
Rooted in Nature's just benignant law like them.
I want no better joys than those that from green Earth
My spirit's blossom drew through the sweet body's stem.
I see no dread in death, no horror to abhor.
I never thought it else than but to cease to dwell
Spectator, and resolve most naturally once more
Into the dearly loved eternal spectacle.¹⁰

This mood of quiet friendliness toward the inevitable end of life appears also in portions of Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Renaissance*, particularly the lines:

Deep in the earth I rested now;
Cool is its hand upon the brow
And soft its breast beneath the head
Of one who is so gladly dead.

⁹From Letter written to his mother September 28, 1914, *Poems* by Alan Seeger, Scribners, p. viii.

¹⁰*Poems* by Alan Seeger "The Sultan's Palace".

Yet this mood is merely temporary in Miss Millay. She is fundamentally *not reconciled to death* as the end. Her temperament impels her to move again into the mood of expectancy and to say, "I would I were alive again"!

The most satisfying expression of the mood of quiet renunciation is found in Lew Sarett's *Let Me Go Down To Dust*. Here the poet genuinely relates man to his "kinsmen of the wild" and in the experience of death, depicts him humbly and unselfishly accepting the way of the universe along with his fellow creatures.

Let me go down to dust and dreams
Gently, O Lord, with never a fear
Of death beyond the day that is done;
In such a manner as becoms
A kinsman of the wild, a son
Of stoic earth whose race is run.
Let me go down to dreams and dust

Gently, O Lord, with quiet trust
And the fortitude that marks a child
Of earth, a kinsman of the wild.
Let me go down as any doe
That nods upon its ferny bed,
And, lulled to slumber by the flow
Of talking water, the muffled brawl

Of far cascading waterfall,
At last lets down its weary head
Deep in the brookmints in the glen;
And under the starry-candled sky,
With never the shadow of a sigh,
Gives its worn body back to earth again.¹¹

This mood has profound religious worth. It is rich in a humble quality of spirit, a quality which man needs to achieve anew. Too long man has separated himself from the rest of nature, insisting that he is of different origin, hence of higher destiny. He has dreamed dreams of immortal blessedness, translated those dreams into creeds, and rationalized his belief in a future life by pleading the superiority of man's nature. Man has reason, of course, to feel elated over his superior opportunities in the rôle of life. As Sherlock Bronson Gass has properly pointed out in his articles, *The Paradox of Modernism*¹² man has evolved beyond his fellow creatures in certain important respects. He has escaped "forever from the dungeon of the brute mind" and modern interpreters of

¹¹*Slow Smoke*, H. Holt Co., 1925.

¹²*The Bookman*, January, 1931.

human nature would do well to heed Gass' caution. But there is another aspect. Abstracting man from nature and building for him "more stately mansions in the skies" has grossly exaggerated his importance. It has created in him an arrogance that has led him to disown his universe. It has so estranged him from the rest of the world of nature that he now finds himself emotionally incapable of adjusting to inevitable experiences encountered in the universe. It may be correctly pointed out, to be sure, that beliefs in a future life arose as reactions to wretched conditions on earth which impelled men to long for and to look forward to better days beyond the setting sun. But this was a tragic solution, for it turned men's eyes away from life at hand and thus prevented them from engaging seriously and intelligently in their present life quest. Now haunted with the possibility of there being no land beyond the setting sun, men find themselves unprepared to adjust their emotions to the prospect of death.

Death is a sobering experience. It is a cruel interruption if one is unready for it. It is terrifying if one is not emotionally reconciled to meeting it. Men need to fellowship more with the mood of death, not alone to accustom themselves to its coming, but constantly to adjust their perspective of life. They need to acquire the mood of humble coöperation with the life and death process in the universe. Orienting one's emotions in the universe means essentially bringing one's self into accord with the spiritual outlook of the world of nature, an outlook shorn of pretentious claims to self-survival, but rich in recognition of social obligation and opportunity: obligation that is cosmic in depth, opportunity that is cosmic in breadth. Men may well learn from creatures of earth this religion of renunciation and thus acquire the emotional poise and strength to approach the twilight of their years, honestly saying:

Let me go down to dust and dreams
Gently, O Lord, with never a fear
Of death beyond the day that is done.
A kinsman of the wild, a son
Of stoic earth whose race is run.

Modern American poets are voicing another religious mood: a mood rich in fellow feeling for these other "kinsmen of the wild". This mood, also, is difficult to achieve. Perhaps the basic reason underlying our difficulty is that we have grossly misconceived animal nature and as a result have unjustly maligned the animal

world. Discovering that our own biological origin lay in that world, we have, as a matter of course, ascribed our vices to our bestial background. Moralists of the modern temper have characterized our excesses as "yielding to our animal nature". Now as a matter of fact, as Joseph Krutch has pointed out in his book, *The Modern Temper*, "The Don Juan" in man "is characteristically human" not animal. It is a perversion of our animal nature; not a reversion to it. In building illusions of self-superiority, men have become blinded to the virtues of animal life. But there are virtues there. In fact, much of the race's social virtues which take the form of devotion to group welfare, grows, as Krutch has said, "from roots which may be traced in animal nature". We need to correct our view of animal nature. We need further to cease detaching ourselves from animal tendencies simply because they are branded "animal" and, instead, honestly acknowledge our organic relation to them. Then, in the spirit of fellow-feeling, we may help to integrate the life of the universe in a richer, cosmic fellowship. Gradually man has sloughed off exclusiveness and blended his life coöperatively with his fellows. The circle of fellowmen has widened. It has grown from tribal, national, to international scope. Is it conceivable that, to some extent, it might become more inter-creatural? There is much in our western mode of life that precludes it: the hunter, the trapper, the butcher and all who enjoy their steaks. Yet we are developing a conscience against needlessly injuring or exploiting animal life. And there are those, not at all sentimentally inclined, who see in men's future orientation in the universe, a more genuine growth of fellow-feeling between man and these other creatures of the earth. Poems like Edwin Markham's *Little Brothers of the Ground*, *The Fate of the Fur Folk*, Lew Sarett's *Four Little Foxes*, *To a Wild Goose Over Decoys*, Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Wild Swans*, *Buck in the Snow*, and Carl Sandburg's numerous sketches, give evidence that some modern spirits have already achieved this cosmic sensitiveness.

by William S. Knickerbocker

HIS OWN BOSWELL

A NOTE ON THE POETRY OF OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

*What have I rescued from the shelf?
A Boswell, writing out himself!
For, though he changes dress and name,
The man beneath is still the same,
Laughing or sad, by fits and starts
One actor in a dozen parts,
And whatsoe'er the mask may be,
The voice assures us, this is he!*

EPILOGUE TO THE BREAKFAST TABLE SERIES

MAX BEERBOHM depicts in one of his ingenious short stories the disillusioning experience of a minor Victorian poet of the nineties who, suffering contemporary neglect and confidently believing that posterity would discover his true quality and render him posthumous fame, made a compact with the devil to be transported by infernal agency a century thence in order with his own eyes to feast delectably upon the spectacle of British Museum readers absorbed in his poetry. Alas! he found that posterity had not revised the judgment of his own generation. He found that he was not only ignored by the future but was utterly unknown and forgotten. Solicitude for one's reputation, whether in the present or the future, may be an enervating obsession which seriously imperils the power of a poet's work. It prevented, I think, the fulfillment of the gifts of Oliver Wendell Holmes; it produced in him, at any rate, a sense of frustration which is freely confessed in several poems and alluded to in incidental lines and passages. A less sanguine temperament might have made Holmes a minor self-pitying poet of the most feeble romantic variety with the result that posterity—in this instance meaning us of today—would leave him to gather the dust he anticipated.

Cycles of taste have violently revolved since Holmes' death and although from say, 1910 to 1925 he may have had a dwindling

coterie of elderly aunts of the prim variety and perhaps of circumspect uncles who had been properly taught what was conventional to respect in American literature, the wholesome return to the necessity of recognizable meaning in poetry (which is being forced on us by the excesses of caprice and ambiguities of the neo-metaphysical and "expressionist" schools) establishes Holmes in a newer and better light. For Holmes, almost solitary among nineteenth century poets of America; achieved the union of gravity and humor in verse not intentionally comic; achieving, that is to say, the triumph of Dryden, Pope, and Byron according to the conditions of his own personality and view of life. The delightful experiments in the direction of this restitution of humor with gravity (sundered successfully by British romantics from Wordsworth to Tennyson) made by our contemporaries like Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, John Crowe Ransom, and Merrill Moore equip us with a sensibility to return to the poetry of Holmes with a new and keen delight. His *Activation* and his famous correction of the drinking song for teetotaler's use, to mention only two of his triumphs in wit, match anything composed by our harlequins.

Holmes had a contemporary reputation as a wit, as Lowell's comment on him in *A Fable for Critics* reminds us, but to think of him only as a wit is to miss completely the full spectrum of his verse. He has, to be sure, poems which are only witty, and some which are only comic. Clever and fluently capable of verbal ingenuities he surely was, but the texture of his temperament with its sentiment, its benevolence, its affectionate timidities restrained his tendencies to rollicking comedy and kept him from being a minor Pope or Byron: while, on the other hand, his joyous sense of life prevented him from being an American Thomas Campbell. He had too much of the spirit of Goldsmith's and Washington Irving's "good-natured man" to be too exclusively a poet of wit or indeed only a satirist. Lowell noted the element of satire in Holmes but although the classic "Wonderful One-Hoss Shay" is explicitly declared in the poem itself as being a satire on the futility of logic, the satire is lost on most readers. Some early experiments in satire—as, for instance, his caustic salute to the contemporary Puritan in "The Moral Bully" which is too blunt, direct, and scolding to be effective in its genre—are instances of failure

Activation

in a mood essentially alien to his powers. It was no error of Providence that he did not, because he could not, write *The Biglow Papers* or *A Fable for Critics*. Holmes had too much of the latitudinarian in him to compose anything like them: he lacked Lowell's vigorous and searing critical powers. And he himself knew it. He early scanned his emotional range and, physician as he was by profession, diagnosed his powers, arriving at a clearly-conceived view of what he could achieve within his limited scope. Few poets have been so modest, so prudent, so sincere, so ready to accept their limitations and confess them so frankly. He was his own Boswell even in critical commentary on his own work: among several of his *apologiae* for his verse his *The Lyre of Anacreon* alone would preclude the comment of anyone else. But, though he conceived himself as the Yankee Anacreon, if the substance and tone of his verse didn't belie it, he might more readily be thought of as the Tom Moore of "the golden day" in New England. As Moore was the sweet singer of Erin, celebrating her legends, heroes, and scenery, so Oliver Wendell Holmes celebrated Massachusetts, particularly Cambridge and Boston. Moore, too, was given to "ana" or table-talk but, unlike Holmes, never in verse. Holmes anticipated Walt Whitman—but in a less mystical and cosmological sense—by celebrating himself in his verse.

This versified "ana" of Holmes give his work part of its unique charm but the unabashed intimacy of his genial, boyish confidence satisfies without satiating our present curiosity in the personalities of men of letters. His epic of himself is not, to be sure, restricted to his series of poems for his college class of 1829 written annually for its reunions, but in the sum they constitute the unfolding of a parochial personality in a happy region and make Holmes something more than the playboy of Harvard. Generously there, as in other poems, he supplies the materials for critical comment and comparison by others which, while not correcting his own estimate of his achievement, tend to sympathy and renewed interest in him. He relieves a commentator from remarking on his failure to achieve his own exalted conception of poetry. His Popean prolegomena, "Poetry: A Metrical Essay", used as a criterion to estimate his actual performance as a whole reveals a disparity between his vision and his powers: it is his early creedal

pronouncement which clearly postulates a view of poetry which arouses awe in the reader but paralyzes the will to attempt it. In that versed exposition he genuflects before the altar of Poesy and asserts that poetry so far transcends human power to communicate it that, in effect, all efforts to do so result in attempts to communicate the incommunicable. To him, poetry is not so much a matter of a beautifully patterned *literary* triumph as it is the psychological richness of an inner state of high emotional ecstasy in the presence of Beauty. So Platonic a notion is likely to result, as it did result in Holmes, in a poet's modest and reverent resignation to a humble place on the lower steps of the altar. By affirming that the office of the poet is to elevate the mystery of the Muse and perhaps to make her even more mysterious and to guard her jealously from profane eyes he succeeded, so far as his own talents of composition were exhibited, in removing the sense of her Real Presence by another degree and added another veil to the eternally Veiled Isis. By his conviction that everyone who felt flutters of sentiment or emotion was a poet in so far as he had feelings whether or not they were articulate (the poet, he contended in the last poem of his collected edition, "To the Poets who only Read and Listen", was every one who could feel even though he couldn't write) Holmes made the Muse panpoetic. By doing so, he incapacitated himself, probably voluntarily, for free sweep in the higher ranges of literary sublimity and contented himself with evoking the limited and conventional emotional responses of everyman. So he was always persecuted by his sense of betrayal of his finer glimpses of the Muse which found expression in his apologetics for his own achievement. By his frank confessions of failure, he narrowly escaped being a whining minor poet.

It is a persistent problem of aesthetics whether poetry is exclusively a literary art or whether it is, as Plato suggested, the universal power of creating beauty in any medium. The confusion these overlapping conceptions produces is likely to hinder the development of a poet's gift. Though this is no longer a mooted question for some of us, apparently it distracted the mind of Holmes. His "Metrical Essay" on poetry is conceptually confused for it benevolently makes poetry mean that it is the universal sense of beauty in the "appreciator" as well as being the

power of creating beauty in any art and in the specific art of literary verse. Consequently, Holmes' logic inevitably leads to the conclusion, not intentionally comic:

Though round the Muse the robe of song is thrown,
Think not the poet lives in verse alone . . .

He who reads right will rarely look upon
A better poet than his lexicon.

It is not inappropriate, therefore, that the final poem in his collected work is that entitled "To the Poets Who Only Read and Listen"; a piece obviously flattering inarticulate readers and less obviously another of his confessions of failure:

We that have sung perchance may find
Our little meed of praise,
And round our pallid temples bind
The wreath of fading bays:

Ah, poet, who hast never spent
Thy breath in idle strains,
For thee the dewdrop morning lent
Still in thy heart remains;

Unwasted . . .

With so grandiose a conception of the majesty and ethereal omnipresence of the Muse, Holmes contented himself with being the laureate of his own gentle and genial moods and today, rapidly nearing the oblivion he foresaw, evokes a lingering sympathy by the pathos of his own modest, but devastatingly true, estimate of his talent. In his apologetic introductory verses

It little matters, soon or late,
A day, a month, a year, an age—
I read oblivion in its date,
And Finis on its title-page.

Deal gently with us, ye who read!
Our largest hope is unfulfilled,—
The promise still outruns the deed,—
The tower, but not the spire, we build.

Holmes' special quality is thrown into high relief if his verse is read in the context of his contemporaries in New England. No one of them is quite so consistently personal in his point of view: his poems are far more ego-centric than those of the New York poet who "celebrated himself". One may not learn much about Longfellow, Whittier, Bryant, or Lowell from their

verses: they are not conscious of themselves and do not direct the reader to the personality behind the lines. The single conception which unifies the diversity of themes in Holmes is his frank confession that he is "his own Boswell". He was bravely aware of himself, of his ancestral past, and made his chief effort to be the versifying commentator of the emotional experiences of a nineteenth century Yankee Brahmin. It was no slight achievement for one of that quality to overcome the regional taboo against self-revelation. New Englanders of the patrician class are not constitutionally capable of fluency: they have a repugnance for the voluble. Their distinction is their Stoic dignity: their reticence and their silence. Holmes' juvenile gusto is unique in his time and place and inevitably infects his readers. He exploits his sensibilities as no other New Englander, unless we except Emily Dickinson, ever did or probably could. His rhythmic gaiety was more native to the Knickerbocker school—say of Nathaniel Parker Willis: and his blithe temperament more like Irving's than any New Englander could match. But while Willis could convey the insouciance of the New Yorker and could vividly catch the nuances of the gay, light metropolis the total effect of his verses is so inconsequential and burdensome that they seem to-day like mere garrulous froth compared to Holmes'. The willowy Willis was a light, tripping Byron of Manhattan, prodigal of his gifts but without ever touching the continuing themes or emotions which command deference in another time. He did not make his muse his confessor as Holmes did. By confiding to his readers his choicest sentiments, by talking to them as confidently as the Rousseau of the *Confessions*, he needs no biography apart from his writings.

Holmes was not, to be sure, a New England Rousseau, though he has Rousseau's reverence for the sanctity and worth of his own moods and sentiments, such as they were; a more likely analogy is that he was the New England Coleridge of the *Table Talk*. Unlike Coleridge, however, he was no transcendentalist; on the contrary, he was an optimistic, benevolent naturalist; professionally a scientist but withal a Unitarian in the Channing succession and being that, he talked in the true succession of his native church. This optimism had its objects of direction, which pointed to a greater kindness, geniality, and tolerance. Largely sceptical of

metaphysical abstractions and of logic he was obviously responsive to the more sentient phases of romantic adoration of nature. Holmes' distinction, as contrasted with the New England poets his contemporaries, is his faithful reflection of the peculiarly regional theology which had evolved from Calvinism through Socinianism to Shaftesburean optimism. Though unlike Lowell he has no elegiac tribute to William Ellery Channing, the effects of Channing on the New England mind are plainly discernible in Holmes' verses. Channing, the apostle of rational benevolence, had sufficiently turned the more liberal Unitarians in the direction of a humanitarian Deism which had its roots and development in the eighteenth century "Enlightenment". The analyst of ideas would find striking similarity between Holmes' philosophy and that of Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Hume, and Paine, but he need not inquire too closely for direct influences for, by Holmes' time, the postulates of the British philosophy of cosmic benevolence were commonplaces among New England Unitarians. This optimistic stream had deeply touched the sources of British poetry and had, in the art of the great English romanticists, undergone developments remote from Holmes' comprehension or sympathy. In Wordsworth and Shelley particularly, it had been metamorphosed from rationalism to emotionalism: a transition too violent and abrupt for the persistently rationalistic character of New England.

Of all the mid-century New England poets, Holmes most clearly conserves the world-view of the eighteenth century British rationalists. His serious reflective poems and his hymns have a thought, frame, and mood strikingly similar to those of Addison and Pope. To be sure, there are only a few of these, possibly because they were alien to Holmes' consciously-assumed poetic character: but more probably because the philosophy itself is limited in its poetic expression, in its abstract conception, and perhaps becomes a motivating power for articulation only in particular applications for specific occasions or as a formative influence upon the poet's temperament and attitude. The most ambitious of Holmes' reflective poems has the somewhat ambiguous title, "A Rhymed Lesson" (though it bears as a sub-title "Urania"). As its companion piece, "Poetry, A Metrical Essay", was Holmes' equivalent of Pope's "Essay in Criticism", so "A Rhymed Lesson"

was his equivalent to the latter's "Essay on Man". Both poems lack the clear, cutting definiteness and pure wit of Pope: they are, instead, intellectually timid and suffused with a sentiment which in the "Metrical Essay" on poetry approaches mawkishness but the later "A Rhymed Lesson" is saved from that defect by Holmes' juvenile hilarity. Holmes' speculative caution, his refusal to indulge too strenuously in theological or metaphysical distinctions (both characteristic of the Channing Unitarian), was rationalized in his poem, "Our Limitations", one of the most revealing and one of his most sublime poems. It reverently reveals the necessity for religious faith by the mind which is really scientific. "Each truth we conquer spreads the realm of doubt": hence, the inescapable necessity for intellectual humility. It is the confession of finite ignorance of the philosophical optimist who is compelled, in the absence of a theological creed, to take the option for the relativity of truth when a dogmatic absolute is refused. Holmes' confession of his own intellectual preference for relativity is given in a genial poem, "The Mind's Diet" which humourously contrasts the mite which limits itself to Stilton cheese with the larvae of the elm which varies its food according to its growth. The versed thesis is:

No reasoning natures find it safe to feed,
For their sole diet, on a single creed.

The obvious consequence of so latitudinarian a principle is spiritual flatulence and volitional decay, lacking the incentives which dogma unquestionably inspires: but Holmes, like other optimistic New England Unitarians, found security against such a consequence of his religious liberalism in a humanism which, unlike the current Babbitt-More humanism, emphasized the will to achieve in a positive manner a vigorous career of moral and spiritual excellence. His classic, "The Chambered Nautilus" is his finest attempt in verse to state the guiding principle of a religion eminently, as it was basically, ethical. "The Living Temple" is Holmes' pious declaration of his religious reverence for the human body and his prayer to God to inspire the human will to make it a residence of holiness. His two well-known hymns, "Hymn of Trust" and "A Sun-day Hymn" have justly found way

into church hymnals but read together disclose how, in the mind of a reverent Theist of New England, the awe of the eighteenth century Deist and the personal pietism of the "enthusiast" have been fused. The "Hymn of Trust" beginning

O Love Divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,

is reminiscent of Wesley's "Love Divine, all love excelling" while "A Sun-Day Hymn",

Lord of all being! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star,
Center and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!

is worthy of comparison with Addison's magnificent "Spacious firmament on high".

But the discipline of nineteenth century natural science, to which Holmes by his profession was dedicated, involved either an hostility or an apathy to the mystical element of religion to which other New England poets—Emerson, Longfellow, and chiefly Whittier—were keenly responsive. Yet it may be said that, contrasted with Lowell, whose rationalism and humanitarianism completely satisfied his capacity for religion, he found in eighteenth century concepts a vitality and nourishment which separates him in his temporal context and gives him a distinction, making him in his serious verse the conservative continuator of a religious tradition which rested on reason and sentiment.

On more than one occasion he affirmed his conviction of that peculiarly Yankee neo-Hebraism which conceived of America as the promised land of the new dispensation: and in this he was the true scion of his Puritan forebears. America, particularly New England, was the New Canaan, and its faithful inhabitants the newly-chosen children of Israel. The faith that the history of the region was a clear demonstration of Divine Providence and that the promise of its future a religious act of faith underlie the body of his serious verse, inspired by a sincere patriotism. The channel of spiritual advance was that of the Unitarians under whose leadership, as of the tribe of Levi, America was to be the

Messiah of nations. Echoes of Cotton Mather, Thomas Paine, and Joel Barlow are noticeable in his poem recited "At the Unitarian Festival", March 8, 1882:

The waves unbuild the wasting shore;
Where mountains towered the billows sweep,
Yet still their borrowed spoils restore,
And build new empires from the deep.
So, while the floods of thought lay waste
The proud domain of priestly creeds,
Its heaven-appointed tides will haste
To plant new homes for human needs.
Be ours to mark with hearts unchilled
The change an outworn church deploras;
The legend sinks, but Faith shall build
A fairer throne on new-found shores.

His patriotism was the orthodox Yankee variety which saw the Nation as the frame of a conscious sectionalism with New England, particularly Massachusetts, as the core of the whole. In this sense, of all the poets of his time and place he was the most completely provincial. His affection for Cambridge and Boston was so powerful that it eminently prescribed his range of topographical sentiment which increased under the stresses of the prelude to the Civil War and found martial utterance, obviously, during that fratricidal conflict. While his national odes fail to reach the eloquence of Lowell's, they possess, on the other hand, a passion which the latter lacked. If, as the new school of Confederate apologists insists, the Civil War was the arbitrament on the field of battle between an industrial North and an agrarian South, the poems of Holmes fail to reveal any such antagonism. The concept, at least, tends to throw into strong relief his spiritual fervor for the national concepts which inevitably were principles of American optimism. There was no sharp cleavage between the theistic postulates of cosmic harmony, universal design, and divine benevolence on the one hand and on the other of national ideals of union with liberty. While in no poem did he sentimentalize the Negro he had in good measure the abhorrence of human slavery which other American idealists, like Paine and Jefferson, expressed in no uncertain terms. He believed the military compulsion of the South to be forcibly restrained from secession was a patriotic necessity imposed by national memories and tradition. His militaristic violence and his chauvinistic vehemence in de-

nouncing Southerners as "traitors" and "rebels" is completely out of his poetic character, though even in his earlier poems he gave clear evidence of his contempt for pacifists and temporizers. Perhaps, given his responsiveness to the dominant moods of his region, one need not be surprised at his susceptibility to the hysteria of war. What moved him out of his set character was his passion for the abstractions of Union and Liberty and the Hebraic conviction in the rightness of the New England theocracy. The youth who wrote the stirring "Old Ironsides" could hardly, when grown, be expected not to be moved by the prospect of the destruction of the Union. Not an abolitionist, he was not even a Uniformitarian Nationalist; he was primarily a Unionist whose concept of the Union with liberty hardly differed in general outlines from the political concepts of the Constitution in Jefferson Davis's *The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy* or in Alexander Stephens's defence of the Confederate interpretation of the American Constitution. For political or economic discriminations, the truth is, Holmes possessed no aptitude or organ: his passionate devotion to union and liberty was the expression of his optimistic Deism, colored by contemporary Northern rationalizations of a political exigency and governmental necessity. His attitude is understandable in the light of his sentiment for and loyalty to New England.

No one could seriously contend that Holmes was a great poet—we must take his own word for it that he was not—but yet, as a minor poet he has uniqueness, slight though it may be, that makes him important. Samuel Rogers was a copious, facile versifier and also a minor poet whose distinction was precisely opposite to that of Holmes. Rogers is the perfect example of that type of minor poet whose work, secondary as it is, has the importance of successful mimicry: in his work one may see vividly dramatized the cycles of poetic taste from Byron to Tennyson as Rogers responded, chameleon-like, to themes and metres which others had achieved and to which the reading public responded. In imitation, he did for poets what Crabb Robinson did as a Boswell for a whole generation. Holmes, in contrast, stubbornly clung to a few stanza-forms and other poetic devices, and for his matter made his verse the vehicle of intimate, personal revelation creating

perhaps, if he created anything, a poetry of congenial table-talk. His peculiar quality is heightened if his verse be contrasted with that of his friend and poetic contemporary, James Russell Lowell. Lowell could—and did—write verses for occasions but they are marked with bardic elevation of grandeur from which Holmes refrained in similar verses. In Holmes' poems, written for special occasions, he is personally conscious of himself, exploiting his immediate sense of his individuality: he is an Elia in verse. Lowell, too, more swiftly responded to the more imaginative phases of British romanticism from Wordsworth to Tennyson while Holmes clung to the poetry of fancy; or, as we should say, of personal sentiment. Lowell's wit, too, was bolder and always with more acid than Holmes' as the *Biglow Papers* and *A Fable for Critics* testify. The difference becomes clearer in Lowell's comment on Holmes in the former's

There's Holmes, who is matchless among you for wit;
A Leyden-jar always full-charged from which fit
The electrical jingles of hit after hit;
In long poems it is painful sometimes, and invites
A thought of the way the new Telegraph writes,
Which pricks down its little sharp sentences spitefully
As if you got more than you'd title to rightfully,
And you find yourself hoping its wild father lightning
Would flame in for a second and give you a frightening.
He has perfect sway of what I call a sham metre
But many admire it, the English pentameter,
And Campbell, I think, wrote most commonly worse,
With less nerve, swing, and fire in the same kind of verse
Nor e'er achieved aught in it so worthy of praise
As the tribute of Holmes to the grand *Marseillaise*.
... His are just the fine hands, too, to weave you a lyric
Full of fancy, fun, feeling, or spiced with satiric
In a measure so kindly, you doubt if the toes
That are trodden upon are your own or your foes.

So Holmes was regarded by the American poet with whose talent his own had more resemblance than with that of any other. The satire, which Lowell notices in Holmes' verse, is less trenchant to-day than then, but the "kindly measure" and the wit are still evident and effective. But more effective is the unique achievement of Holmes in a very narrow scope of poetic possibilities. Within a frame of technique appropriated from English poets like Pope, Gray, Campbell, Moore, and Burns he revealed the possibilities of a subject matter of individual sentiment, peculiarly his own, and wrote himself down to the key of that stanza of

Gray's *Elegy* which emphasizes two qualities of life: "pleasing" and "anxious".

Barrett Wendell recorded the words of his kinsman, Oliver Wendell Holmes, at a dinner in 1886, which disclosed the clue to the latter's personality. Holmes declared that "the most perfect stanza in our language is one that his mother repeated to him when past ninety-one, which nothing but old age can reveal in all its perfect beauty. It is this stanza in Grey's *Elegy*:

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind.

"Pleasing and anxious", continued Barret Wendell, "he said, are to him the final epithets for human life." The epithets fitly describe the poetry, certainly, of Oliver Wendell Holmes. That poetry is not a very vigorous one, yet it is not febrile: it has a plaintive note in spite of its wit, never feline or malicious, and, according to the poet's own assertion, is the revelation of one who was "his own Boswell". Not modesty, but the handsome honesty of an acute yet amiable mind, prompted Holmes to preface his collected verse with a sonnet which estimates his range and effect better than any critic could:

From the first gleam of morning to the gray
Of peaceful evening, lo, a life unrolled!
In woven pictures all its changes told,
Its lights, its shadows, every fitting ray,
Till the long curtain, falling, dims the day,
Steals from the dial's disk the sunlight's gold,
And all the graven hours grow dark and cold
Where late the glowing blaze of noontide lay.
Ah! the warm blood runs wild in youthful veins,—
Let me no longer play with painted fire;
New songs for new-born days! I would not tire
The listening ears that wait for fresher strains
In phrase new-moulded, new-forged rhythmic chains,
With plaintive measures from a worn-out lyre.

by Frederick J. Pohl

THE EMILY DICKINSON CONTROVERSY

MYSTERY and fact conspire to make the life of Miss Emily Dickinson the most interesting woman's life yet lived in America. Every small town knows its recluse, its spinster disappointed in love. Gossip offered various explanations for Emily's apparent inability to make normal reactions to environment. She was called "queer"; she was thought a victim of a love disappointment, or of some peculiar introversion. But Miss Dickinson was a rich personality, shifting, evading, eluding. Her poems and letters revealed her not as an inadequate personality, but as one who lived in retirement because she was the first woman in America entirely adequate for the art of poetry. In a situation in which most women would shrivel, she grew to taller size. That is her secret. She knew supremely well how to grow—a growth that "gravitates within", even though in 1853 before love had matured her, she wrote, "How to grow up I don't know". Bound by her Immortality fixation to a Calvary of renunciation, she learned "superiority to fate" with patience for "a pittance at a time". Though a mystic who "never felt at home below", she was also a practical New Englander who could "make routine a stimulus". She had her moods of excess of joy, but having the Force to curb her own impulsiveness, she learned that "power is only pain, stranded, through discipline".

The intriguing mystery in Emily Dickinson's case is the problem as to how a woman could renounce the world, the flesh, and publication, and yet attain such fulness of life. How could she live as she did on a "banquet of abstemiousness", and yet be so joyous a spirit? How upon her "acre of a rock" could she raise such blooms? The pressure of this question makes her biography

of importance to the philosopher and mystic as well as to the reader of her poetry.

Emily knew how "complicate" was man's discipline, "compelling him to choose himself his pre-appointed pain". But daring battled with discipline in Emily and saved her from becoming static. Her mind acknowledged no limits save those of her own determining. She uncovered the ribs of Death. She stripped Deity bare. Infinitude had no face for her. Prayer ceased when Silence taught her worship. Nothing the world holds precious, neither popularity nor the world's inexorable conventions—such as marriage—could hold the gate against this adventurous mind. But Nature kept her in a garden, and her dying for Beauty was her discipline.

There is controversy over the identity of the man who was the inspiration of Emily Dickinson's love poems. It is argued that prying into the secret of the poet's heart is impertinence and profanation; that interest in the love story diverts attention from her poetry; that the identity of the lover is of no literary importance. A large body of her admirers have conned over the words "mystic" and "hypersensitive" until they have partially evolved for themselves and partially accepted from this poet's family biographer a fragile and nebulous personality before which they offer something of the ignorant devotion found in religious shrines. Any attempt to disturb the contour of this misty figure meets with outraged resentment. There are others who see Emily Dickinson more definitely, but prefer to have her kept prim, bloodless, emotionally static, except when she was writing. They evince an almost pathetic eagerness to preserve her as one great genius who was so far superior to the treachery of the blood as to be above temptation.

The reasons why it is necessary to deal with the love story are that wild surmise as to Emily Dickinson's sex life belittle and befoul her character; that the literary world has always left no stone unturned in the endeavor to unearth every obtainable fact in the biographies of our greatest poets and has treasured these facts as part of the most precious heritage of civilization; that the life of Emily Dickinson, even aside from her poetry, is as important as any ever lived by any woman; that the story of her

love in itself presents an inspiring drama of renunciation; that only when the love story is clear beyond a reasonable doubt can curious minds overcome their preoccupation with it; that the Emily who respected Truth and hated lies would herself "carve away the mists" now that no one living can in any slightest way be affected by a seventy-five years' old story of honorable lovers; and that the full significance of many of Emily's poems is a locked chamber to which the identity of the lover is the only key. Emily herself wished to know everything there was to be known about her favorite authors: the Brownings, George Eliot, the Brontës; she had a great reverence for all experiences of the heart and spirit.

II.

There is a mare's nest of love theories, with a line of visible and concealed ladies who testify as to their convictions. In Amherst one meets cherished legends and traditions. The psychoanalysts and medical theorists have found Emily a choice subject, and have made pronouncements of "a sublimated sex instinct", or introversion, or sinister perversion, or near madness, or have advanced a dark suggestion of an Electra complex. Some reviewers believe there was a superficial love for several men, or a synthetic "truly phantom lover" created by Emily as a "composite picture" of all her lovers. Others believe there was "no love story at all". Tender-minded squeamishness which has shrunk from admitting that Emily may have been in love with a married man, has packed its idol in the cotton of a theory that love is more innocent when merely imagined than when unconventionally experienced. Emily's love poems are therefore "wish fulfillments". Thus, unconscious of what they were doing, prudish lovers of Emily have made her a perverted character absorbed in sex imaginings. It is a healthier view to take "rainbows as the common way, and empty skies the eccentricity".

If Emily cared more for her love poems than for her lover, it was only *after* she had renounced him. The love meant everything to her at one time, meant enough at any rate to inspire the greatest love poems written by any woman. That love could not conceivably have been less intense than the poetry it inspired. It was not love for several men synthesized, but an impassioned love

for one man above all other persons. In the poem, "Of all the souls that stand create I have elected one . . .", Emily declares that when "subterfuge is done" the reader will behold the one she "preferred to all". There is reason to believe that Emily never shared with her family the secret of her heart. There is indication that she used "subterfuge" to keep her love concealed from those about her. "I never had a mother. I suppose a mother is one to whom to hurry when you are troubled". "Father is too busy with his briefs to notice what we do." "I had a terror . . . I could tell to none." "I have none to ask." "Better of it (a secret) continual be afraid, than it and whom you told it to be-side." She knew that "to simulate is stinging work to cover what we are". Though she admitted this to herself, she would not admit it to others, for their own sake, because the realization would be too devastating for them. She thought of "a secret kept" that it "can appal but one". Because her secret was a most exceptional one, she employed the unusual word. Her secret did appal.

Most significant, therefore, is Emily's autobiographical statement to Mr. Higginson: "When a little girl, I had a friend who taught me Immortality; but venturing too near, himself, he never returned. Soon after my tutor died, and for several years my lexicon was my only companion. Then I found one more, but he was not contented I be his scholar, so he left the land."

III.

Mrs. Mabel Loomis Todd, one of the first editors of Emily Dickinson's poems, has said that she told all the family wished known. What she told (1891) is that Emily "lived in seclusion from no love-disappointment". In 1930 Mrs. Todd asserted that in her own first account of Emily's life "the reader will find Mr. Untermeyer's theory [there was no love story at all]—none, that is, in the sense of mutual *rapprochement*, fully and finally sanctioned. Here is fact, not conjecture. But . . . since it lacks wildness, it will not be part of the legend." We may fairly ask how anyone with this point of view can avoid interpreting Emily's love poems as "wish fulfillments". Rather than admit the influence of a lover, is it preferable to impute to the poet prolific sex imaginings? Most

students seem inclined to agree with Mr. R. N. Linscott (*Bookman*, April, May, 1930) that "*Further Poems . . .* made it evident that this love episode played an important, perhaps a decisive, part in shaping Emily's life and writings".

In the *Saturday Review of Literature*, July 5, 1930, Mr. Louis Untermeyer asked: "Why have a great many of the finest letters of Emily Dickinson been 'edited'? What was the scandal after Emily's death that ended in a law suit in 1896?" The law suit might not at first seem to concern Emily Dickinson's poetry, but it is significant that Mr. Higginson thought it of sufficient pertinence to include in his collection of Dickinson manuscripts a printed pamphlet giving a speech of counsel in the suit. (Galatea Collection, Boston Public Library). Evidently Mr. Higginson felt that the law suit should be laid in the path for research workers. The readers of Emily Dickinson should be made aware of a forty years' struggle little known to the American literary world, for in larger measure than the public realizes, it is due to the Dickinson-Todd feud that Emily Dickinson suffered in figure posthumously.

There had come to Amherst in 1881 Mrs. Mabel Loomis Todd, a very talented young woman, wife of Professor Todd, who became well acquainted with the Dickinson family. She was chosen by Lavinia to be the editor of Emily's poems and letters. It is said that Mrs. Sue Dickinson had expected to become Emily's biographer. There is written evidence to show that Mrs. Dickinson was sympathetic towards Emily. There is also testimony to the fact that Mrs. Sue Dickinson was a cultured, well-read woman, a social leader in the town, and superior in these matters to her sisters-in-law. Mrs. Todd appeared as editor of the manuscripts. Sue felt superior right to them and to presenting Emily to the public. There was jealousy between Mrs. Dickinson and Mrs. Todd over the introduction of Emily Dickinson to the literary world. For some years Lavinia remained loyal to Mrs. Todd. But shortly after the completion of her editorial labors, Mrs. Todd received news that Lavinia Dickinson was bringing suit against her over a strip of land which Mrs. Todd said had been promised her, in return for her waiver of royalties, by Austin (who died before he could sign the deed), and which Lavinia said had been un-

wittingly signed away by her at the insistence of Mrs. Todd. The suit was won by the Dickinsons; was appealed, and lost by the defendant. Lavinia died in 1899 and for fifteen years no further volumes of Emily Dickinson's poetry were issued. Then in 1914, one year after the death of Sue, Mrs. Martha Dickinson Bianchi took up the cudgels for her mother and new poems from Emily Dickinson began once more to appear. Ten years later Mrs. Bianchi published *The Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson* and the *Complete Poems*, both being Mrs. Todd's work (except for the biographical part), with Mrs. Todd's name omitted. Mrs. Todd later published a more complete edition of the Letters.¹

IV

An outline of Emily's love story has been given piecemeal by Mrs. Martha Dickinson Bianchi.² In 1914 Mrs. Bianchi declared that the list of those her aunt had "bewitched . . . including college boys, tutors, law students, the brothers of her girl friends, —several times their affianced bridegrooms even; and the maturer friendships—literary, Platonic, Plutonic, passages varying in intensity and at least one passionate attachment whose tragedy was due to the integrity of the lovers, who scrupled to take their bliss at another's cost". Ten years later Mrs. Bianchi wrote: "It was on a visit (1854) . . . in Philadelphia, that Emily met the fate she had instinctively shunned . . . But the one word he implored, Emily would not say. Unable to endure his life under the old conditions, . . . he . . . silently withdrew . . . dying prematurely". "She urges a friend to name a little son by the name never like any other to her ears." (Emily wrote, "Will you call him Robert for me?") On page 353 of *Life and Letters* Mrs. Bianchi identified Emily's Philadelphia friend with the preacher, the subject of the Clark letters. In *Further Poems* Mrs. Bianchi said: "The love poems . . . form an almost unbroken narrative of Emily's own experiences, from the first sight of the man she heard as a stranger preaching in Philadelphia, on through their mutual bewilderment,

¹*The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Harpers. 1931.

²Preface to *The Single Hound*. Little, Brown & Co. 1914.

Life and Letters of Emily Dickinson. Houghton Mifflin. 1924.

Introduction to *Further Poems*. Little, Brown & Co. 1929.

Emily Dickinson Face to Face. Houghton Mifflin. 1932.

certainty, and renunciation". In *Emily Dickinson Face to Face* (page 51), Mrs. Bianchi repeated her story of an "already married" "young clergyman" in Philadelphia.

No lover can be named who fits Mrs. Bianchi's story of Philadelphia in all details. How did the confusions in her story arise? Her theory as to Emily's lover is a combination of three accurate sources: one a correct observation that Emily had showed the effects of having fallen in love during the trip to Washington and Philadelphia in 1854; another correct observation that Emily had formed a friendship with a Philadelphia preacher; and another correct observation that many of the love poems Emily left at her death give evidence that the man she loved had died many years before her, and since he was presumably near Emily's own age, he had "died prematurely". Thus we have Mrs. Bianchi's story that Emily loved a preacher met in Philadelphia in 1854 who died prematurely.

Emily met Edward Hunt in Washington; he died prematurely. For the moment and for the sake of the argument let us say that if Emily loved Edward Hunt, she found it necessary to conceal her tragic love by "subterfuge", because he was the husband of one so close to her as Helen Hunt, a woman well known in Amherst; and she found it convenient not to correct her family's mistaken impression that she was in love with one of her preacher friends. Mrs. Bianchi unwittingly took the name Robert (from Robert Browning, referred to by Emily after the death of Mrs. Browning had left him with an only son), the profession and residence of the Philadelphia preacher friend (subject of the Clark letters, who did not die until 1882 at the age of sixty-eight), and the premature death of Hunt, and put them into one never existent individual, the Reverend Robert, . . . a Philadelphia preacher who "left his profession and home and silently withdrew with his wife and an only child to a remote city, a continent's width remote . . . dying prematurely".

Mrs. Bianchi has not named the Philadelphia preacher, dares not name him; for, having once told us that his first name was Robert and that he "died prematurely", she cannot find a Philadelphia preacher to fit her story, and by naming one would flatly prove her own ignorance in the case. Mrs. Bianchi is a writer of

romances, and a poet. She is temperamentally indifferent to the exciting demands of factual biography.

The copyright law gives control of publication of all unpublished material to the heirs of an author, no matter in whose hands legal possession and ownership of that unpublished material may lie. Mrs. Bianchi as the direct heir of her aunt holds the right to forbid publication of any or all unpublished Emily Dickinson manuscripts. Since we know from the *Book Buyer*, May, 1892, that Mrs. Todd catalogued 1,200 poems in addition to those in the first two volumes (containing 282 poems), and since less than a total of 850 poems (including *Further Poems* and *Emily Dickinson Face to Face*) have as yet been published, we have reason to enquire as to the several hundred poems that still await publication. The owners of such material cannot now publish without Mrs. Bianchi's permission, and naturally will not yield to her the copyright advantages which will be theirs when the law permits. The present situation is a case of "cannot" on the one hand and "will not" on the other. Caught between a family feud and the copyright law, Emily Dickinson's posthumous "Letter to the World" remains incomplete.

V.

When Josephine Pollitt^{*} identified the Philadelphia preacher, the subject of the Clark letters, Dr. Charles Wadsworth, she found that he could not have been the lover, for he did not die "prematurely", and he was still in Philadelphia at the time when Emily wrote (April 26, 1862) of the "one more" who had "left the land". Furthermore, there was no evidence in Emily's poems that she was in love with any preacher; to the contrary such poems as "The Bible is an antique volume" and "'Heavenly Father', take to Thee the supreme iniquity" would have inexpressibly shocked any preacher orthodox enough to hold a pulpit in Emily's day. Emily, the independent-minded, disrespectful to the God of the churches, skeptical of what clergymen preached and her family believed—"They are religious, except me, and address an eclipse every morning, whom they call their 'Father'"—Emily, the self-reliant,

^{*}*Emily Dickinson: The Human Background of Her Poetry*, Josephine Pollitt. Harpers, 1930.

who renounced church forms, and kept the Sabbath by "staying at home", in her maturity could have been in love only with a heretic. It is much more likely that Emily's lover was not a clergyman than that he was.

Josephine Pollitt unearthed Mr. Higginson's testimony as to the most important of Emily's friendships: "Major Hunt interested her more than any man she ever saw". Mr. Higginson's statement was part of his biographical outline of Emily's life, and not part of or attached to a letter, as erroneously printed on page 210 of Miss Taggard's book. Mr. Higginson's record of his 1870 interview with the poet is to be found in two letters and a biographical outline. The first letter is now in the Galatea Collection in the Boston Public Library; the second letter is in the Harvard University Library; and the biographical outline of Emily Dickinson is in the Galatea Collection. The letter in the Harvard Library tells us that the sheet headed "E. D. again" was not part of a letter but was a separate document. Mr. Higginson separated it from the letter with which he had enclosed it, for it is now in one library and that letter in another. In the *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1891, years before there was any thought of a controversy as to the identity of the lover, Mr. Higginson wrote: "She always persisted in regarding [me] . . . as a literary counselor and confidant . . . I soon abandoned all attempt to guide in the slightest degree this extraordinary nature, and simply accepted her confidences." In connection with Mr. Higginson's report of Edward Hunt's statement to Emily that her dog "understood gravitation", it is interesting to note that in 1866 Emily wrote to Mr. Higginson, "Whom my dog understood could not elude others". The suggestion is strong that he was indeed Emily's confidant. She knew that literature is a record of life; and that one cannot truly record life unless he has that sympathy, that breadth and intuition of understanding that make it possible for others to talk more freely before him than before most. She could, for instance, tell Mr. Higginson that she found the most interesting friendship of her life in one who was already the husband of another, and she knew that he would comprehend. Emily was artist first and lover second, *after* her renunciation of the lover. To one with whom she discussed her poems as she did with Mr. Higginson, she would not

have scrupled to drop a hint as to her love story. Mr. Higginson does not impress one as having been a gossip man. He did not use exaggeration in his writings; he chose his words carefully; he practised restraint. His friendships with women were wide. He was a trained thinker; an observer of life. He had known Helen Hunt for four years; he had corresponded with Emily for eight years. He well knew what he was doing when he recorded Major Hunt's name as he did, and filed it away for the future to read. "Of all persons for whom first-hand information is claimed, Mr. Higginson is nearest in time, he talked with Emily herself, his is the only opinion independent of the Dickinson family, it is the one man's opinion yet given, his is the only information given directly, it was to him that Emily wrote her autobiographical statement, he names the major unhesitatingly, and he names no other." (Letter by Josephine Pollitt in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, July 5, 1930).

Hunt "left the land" in 1857 when he went to Key West. He was mortally injured September 30, 1863, and Emily wrote in the summer of 1864: "I was ill since September, and since April in Boston for a physician's care". This was the first of her two long periods of illness, with a total of about fifteen months in Boston. Emily's illness seems to have been more than trouble with her eyesight, as the poem, "Bereaved of all I went abroad", suggests. There was obsession with someone's death and the necessity of using soporifics.

There is no disputing the fact that seven years after Major Hunt's death Emily thought of him as the most interesting man she had ever met. We naturally ask, *What* did he mean to her? Was he the man she loved? No reason has yet been advanced to deny that he was. But another question is, *Why* did he interest her more? A study of Edward Hunt's mind and character is the most pertinent factual contribution to a biographical study of Emily Dickinson. The brilliant young scientist, Edward Hunt, was the antithesis of a preacher. Mathematical physics, not the church, was his approach to God. He felt and clearly expressed the "cosmic religious sense" with which a later mathematical physicist, Einstein, has made us familiar. Hunt declared that "a mathematical formula is the nearest approach to the mind of God". His

position has received confirmation in the conclusions of modern science. As Sir James Jeans says in *The Mysterious Universe*, "Our efforts to interpret nature in terms of the concepts of pure mathematics have, so far, proved brilliantly successful . . . From the intrinsic evidence of his creation, the Great Architect of the Universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician . . . The universe can be best pictured . . . as consisting of pure thought, the thought of what, for want of a wider word, we must describe as a mathematical thinker." Emily liked nature unmarred by interfering science, the kind of science that charted heaven, the kind that was too certain of itself. Herein is a point of departure for those who set out to discover why Hunt, the scientist, interested Emily. His thinking did not establish a limit to imagination, but was witness that in scientific reasoning, as well as in childish fancy, imagination can "frisk about", can dance into Infinity. Edward Hunt was trained in carefulness in research and exactness in the statement of his findings, but he loved philosophical cogitations. He would have been entranced by a poem like "Perception of an object costs", in which Emily reasons that science at first dims awe; then the new knowledge acquired outvalues the former mystery; objects are nothing (no better than non-existence) save as men perceive them; but man in his conceit of knowing nature presumes to criticize what his intellect cannot compass. Hunt was patient of detail but partial to speculation. "To see is never quite the sorcery it is to surmise", Emily declared in 1878. And she wrote "The Moon upon her fluent route", into the eight lines of which is packed the grand conception of a purposed universe culminating in the dawn of a conscious humanity. This was the way Hunt's mind worked.

VI.

Genevieve Taggard⁴ presents two out of three affidavits by unnamed correspondents (Mrs. "X" and Mrs. "Z") to the effect that Lavinia said that the preacher George Gould (Amherst 1850) was Emily's lover, and that Emily was engaged to him the year he was to graduate, but submitted to her father's veto of the match. The third statement signed Mrs. "Y" declared that Mrs. Sue Dickinson

⁴*The Life and Mind of Emily Dickinson*, Genevieve Taggard, Knopf, 1930.

said that Emily was in love with a young lawyer. The affidavit of Mrs. "X" is invalidated by errors: that Emily kept a promise invariably to wear white and never go outside the gate, for Gould's sake, after the year he was to graduate; and that after her father's death, although Gould had already married another woman, Emily was held from marrying Gould by fear of her father's "wrath". Mrs. "X" must be regarded as an incompetent witness. Both of Miss Taggard's unnamed correspondents specify 1850 (the year of Tutor Humphrey's death) as the date of the Gould affair. Gould could not have been the "one more" whom Emily says she found "several years" after her tutor's death. In her *Calendar of Dates* (page 347), Miss Taggard gives under "1854"—"George Gould went west, dates given in several places as early as 1853". The dates are indeed given in several places as 1853, including notes for a biographical record in Gould's own handwriting. Genevieve Taggard's book is the only place in which his going west is given as 1854. The facts are too stubborn for Miss Taggard. She strains the proprieties of scholarship to put Gould in Philadelphia in 1854 so that Emily might have met him there, but Gould was not within 800 miles of Philadelphia in that year. If Miss Taggard succeeded in proving that Emily fell in love with Gould in 1854, she would merely have succeeded in throwing out the testimony of her correspondents upon which she bases her entire story of Gould. Miss Taggard throws it out anyway, for she thinks it "unlikely" (page 110) that there was any "avowal" of love made by Emily and George Gould in 1850. Miss Taggard disposes even of the plausibility of the testimony of Mrs. "X" and Mrs. "Z", for while these two women state that Emily "promised to love" and was "engaged to" Gould in 1850, Miss Taggard (page 119) says we cannot tell whether Emily was already in love with Gould, but that "after four years" (in 1854) . . . "now the love-story is plausible".

Some may think that the difficulties in the way of accepting the Gould thesis would have disappeared if Miss Taggard had been content to present Gould as merely a youthful lover in the year 1850, and not after. But the full implications of her analysis of Emily should be weighed before acceptance of George Gould as of any importance in Emily's life. The picture of the poet which

Miss Taggard gives is blasphemy against the spirit of Emily Dickinson. Emily appears a victim of her father's selfishness, a pitiful negative, beneath the surface a "vain", an "unnatural woman", "superstitious", with the primitiveness of a wild creature, often consciously on the verge of actual madness. This is quite in keeping with the modern notion of the untamed Libido and is sugar for those who insist that biography be Freudianized. The sanity and vigor of the letters and poems give no such impression of Emily. We may deny absolutely that the Emily who was playfully wicked and daringly irreverent believed herself one of the worst of sinners. Miss Taggard thinks (page 282) that Emily had this Pauline sense of guiltiness, and on pages 294, 295 she says it is difficult to explain how Emily could know evil so instinctively and yet believe so "blithely" in goodness. But it needs no explanation had Emily found herself unexpectedly and innocently in love with an already married man. Miss Taggard makes of Emily's love affair a sickly travesty of love,—since Gould's proposing honorable marriage to her was a sinking, (so Genevieve Taggard insists on interpreting the poem, "I rose because he sank")—a feeble weakening of moral fiber. Gould "in pleading, was weak". What kind of love was that? How unfair of Emily to call his honorable proposal a sinking, and thus condemn his putting into spoken words what she was putting into written words! What must have been Emily's honest estimate of her own poems; such as, "I rose to his requirements", "Wild nights", et cetera? No! The man Emily loved was already married, and when he temporarily lost his head, she helped him to say farewell forever.

Miss Taggard's thesis would require her to interpret all the references in the poems to the death of Emily's lover as evidence that Emily thought of Gould's marriage to (and presumable love for) Nellie Grout in 1862 as his spiritual death. This interpretation would ascribe incredible pettiness and hopeless jealousy to Emily Dickinson and would make of her love a belittling experience and in no sense an inspiration of great poems. The most serious charge against Miss Taggard's thesis is that it discounts Emily's ecstatic love for nature, because (and Miss Taggard gives what seems to be her personal reaction) "nature is no focus" (page 247) for the attention of an active soul. But as E. Merrill

Root says, "The statement that Nature is no focus for the soul is a modern superstition, a mere hypnosis of fashion; one might as intelligently say, 'Earth is no basis for the feet'. To Emily Dickinson, love, loneliness, and death were negative foci, things that brought her soul to the intensity that is poetry, but yet were in themselves thwartings, disappointments, life unrealized, terrors. But one focus was positive, happy, affirmative, real. In Nature, Emily Dickinson could step out of the cluster of thwartings. In Nature she could find beauty, freedom, delight, life on the wing. In Nature only was she free—the radiant girl, the whimsical wild laughing girl running through sun and wind. Her garden was no 'escape' in the base modern sense; that is, it was no escape *out* of reality; it was her one avenue *into* reality." Emily Dickinson, without her joyousness of spirit and her love for nature, tinged with madness, has been psychologized by Miss Taggard into an uninteresting person, no more interesting than the preacher, George Gould. Compared with the active soldier, Major Hunt, the preacher was at a disadvantage. Miss Taggard must have felt conscious of this when on page 159 of her book she suggests that Emily was fearful (the year of Gould's marriage) that a bullet might reach Gould's heart. The Civil War was not shooting "Minieballs" through the streets of Worcester where Gould married.

VII.

Uncertainty as to how objective Emily's poems may be, makes us hesitate to look to them for conclusive proof of biographical data. But at least they will show us whether one love story fits where another does not. Mrs. Isabel Paterson (*Herald Tribune*, February 21, 1930) said, "There are poems also which indicate that Emily endured some irremediable shock, more profound than a parting in life". The student of the problem will read the love poems analytically. Many carry biographical implications. For instance, in the poem "Mine by the right of the white election" can the line "Mine by the grave's repeal" refer to a man who had forgotten Emily and gone off to marry another woman? Could Emily think the grave's repeal of such a marriage would restore her lover to her? Or had the man she loved already been released

by death from his marriage to another woman whose hold upon him was less than Emily's and to whom he had been married from before the time Emily met him? An echo of Emily Dickinson's long-remembered conversation with Edward Hunt is discernible in the poem, "Within my garden rides a bird", a poem in which Emily's dog is confronted with the mystery of gravitation. It is difficult to refrain from planting "acres of perhaps". The love poems tell us that Emily Dickinson took love as only great natures can, "anterior to life, posterior to death". She found what stimulus there is in peril, and she courted danger that "disintegrates satiety". Her mind worked without inhibitions. When she met Love, there was no shrinking back. She declared that she would like even the Devil, had he fidelity. Her mind and heart went forth against convention, against the religious fear of doubt and sin, against playing safe. She tells us that after she "groped upon his breast", she was different, and no longer "wandered so". She seems to suggest a number of previous flirtations. She definitely says she received proposals which she declined because of him. She never doubted the permanence of his affection for her. She questioned her own attitude. She knew that she meant everything to him. "I make his crescent fill or lack". No skepticism assailed her as to the reality of her romance. No disillusionment emptied her heart. Life gave her the "flood in a bowl", but it always remained a full bowl. And in the years of her "terror", when she "lived on dread" and apprehension lent dramatic value to events, and even when Major Hunt was dead, no disillusionment thwarted agony. She experienced the giving and taking away again of life's two-handedness. After "trying on the utmost", she rallied her shattered force and thereafter went steed against all assaults of circumstance. She discovered that "mirth is the mail of anguish", in which she armed herself lest anyone "spy the blood" and see her hurt. While her path straitened, her vision cleared. Inner conflict did not cease,—but the Spirit never reveals "its Hour with itself".

Throughout the locked years and after the grave "preceded" her, she dwelt within her inmost self, entertaining the "Emperor of Men". She was a poet so consecrated to her art and so filled with the joy of creation that she was impatient of the petty inter-

ruptions of social intercourse and the drag of criticism and gossip. She concealed first her mind and afterwards her body. She found that she could bend the bow of her intensity further in her father's house than in Amherst parlors or beyond. Save for Beauty and Truth which were her "throng", she welcomed few visitors. She outgrew the love for the one human being, and in that solitude which admits a soul to itself, she found the All of insight, of Love, of creative joy. "Defeat was an outgrown anguish" to her who could say, "I write Poets—All". She sang of triumph, which "may be of several kinds". She never "plated the residue of woe with monotony", but with revelry, and held her solitary course. The result, which for too many years the world has called "queerness", we now know was what Emily herself called it, "slow gold, but everlasting". Yet not altogether slow. An average of a poem a week for thirty years was a swift frequency of ecstasy. The "exhilaration" left her ever "a little newer", and it is her enchantment for her readers that she so often communicates that lifting breeze of newness.

It has not been positively proved that Edward Hunt was the inspiration of Emily Dickinson's love poems, but it is undeniable that of all the men who have been named, Edward Hunt is the only one who could have been that inspiration, for all the known facts fit together only in his case. Not one factual argument has ever been advanced to show that Hunt could not have been the man in question. When all the poems have been arranged in chronological order, as they can be by periods of handwriting, age of manuscripts, etc., (if and when Mrs. Bianchi gives permission), it will become known whether the poems that refer to the lover's death were all written after the death of Edward Hunt, from the end of 1863 onward. If the evidence of chronology eventually substantiates the Hunt theory, complete acceptance of that theory will be inescapable.

by Moultrie Guerry

MAKERS OF SEWANEE

WILLIAM PORCHER DU BOSE

WILLIAM PORCHER DU BOSE was among both those who made and those who were made by Sewanee. He brought to the making of the University his rich experience of thirty-six full years, but in his forty-six years of residence upon the Mountain, he became so identified with Sewanee and her Spirit that he may be thought of also as a resultant of her faith and life. Indeed, he tells us that the story of the University's founding was a part of the romance and poetry of his youth.

William Porcher was born in Winnsboro, S. C., where his father, Mr. Theodore Du Bose, was just taking up residence on a new plantation, having moved from the low country in the vicinity of Charleston. Although he did not attend school until he was eight, he learned some good hard lessons riding ponies. He went to school to a Mr. Hudson, who with his two hundred and fifty pounds inspired such awe in his pupils that one of them said: "If Mr. Hudson were to speak to me, I'd faint; and if he went to put his hand on me, I'd die". Du Bose and his teacher got along famously in the classics but not in mathematics. Mr. Hudson was not a good teacher of figures, William's father succeeded no better with him, and the general conclusion was that the boy was a "fool in math." anyway. But Mr. Theodore Du Bose's theory of education held no place for weaknesses. He wanted, said Dr. Du Bose, "the best thing for me, although the hardest". So the boy was given an algebra to master all alone. For hours and weeks, in spare time, William pored over that book. It was a dark puzzle; but when the year was past, he had mastered it completely.

Pursuing his theory of education, Mr. Du Bose, instead of sending William to the University of Virginia to cultivate his classical

bent, entered the boy, who was slight of frame and physique, in the South Carolina Military College known as the Citadel. After three months probation the matriculants at the Citadel were subjected to stiff entrance examinations. William Porcher Du Bose came out first, even in mathematics! Although he was less than sixteen years of age at this time, he held his standing throughout his career at the Citadel, with only one break. At the end of the first year, he was made corporal—"the greatest moment of his life"; and for the first two years all went smoothly and happily—not only on the Citadel grounds but in Charleston's courtly society, especially when the girls and boys drifted on flat boats, filled with straw, down the Ashley River and around the Battery, under a sympathetic moon.

But the third year saw a strange let-down, and yet not strange to many a college man. Cadet Du Bose lost his high standing a little; he neglected his prayers; he allowed a touch of the "blues" to get into his letters to his mother. His father saw what he had written and detected what he sternly condemned, in a letter to his son, as "the weakness, the folly, the unmanliness of being homesick". Dr. Du Bose says he read his father's letter as he strolled down King Street. It was "like a lash". He hastened back to the Citadel determined to recover his standing. But it was too late, he says: he came out only second in his class at the end of his junior year.

The beginning, however, of a great change had taken place. He was confirmed at St. Michael's Church, Charleston, that Spring. Although he had been brought up in the truly religious atmosphere of the new vital Christianity that followed on the days of Otey, it was not customary for men to be confirmed. In the Du Bose community, the custom was restored about this time by the influence of William's Aunt Betsy and her brother. The latter on his bed of extreme illness asked for confirmation and invited his friends, among whom he was most popular, to do the same. They did so in a body.

Another factor of considerable influence was a letter from Tom Stoney, a gay young cousin at the University of Virginia, who wrote of his determination to study for the ministry. And, then at the end the summer came the climactic experience which must be told in Dr. Du Bose's own words:

Three cadets, returning from a long march and series of encampments, and a brief stoppage at their common home, spent on their way back to their garrison a night in a certain city, and returned at midnight hilarious and weary from what was called a "roaring farce" at the little theatre, to occupy one bed at the crowded hotel. In a moment the others were in bed and asleep. There was no apparent reason why I should not have been so too, or it should just then have occurred to me that I had not of late been saying my prayers. Perfectly unconscious and unsuspecting of anything unusual, I knelt to go through the form, when of a sudden there swept over me a feeling of the emptiness and unmeaningness of the act and of my whole life and self. I leapt to my feet trembling, and then that happened which I can only describe by saying that a light shone about me and a Presence filled the room . . . I continued I know not how long, perfectly conscious of, simply but intensely feeling, the Presence, and fearful, by any movement, of breaking the spell. I went to sleep at last, praying that it was no passing illusion, but that I should awake to find it an abiding reality. It proved so.

Further on he makes this interesting commentary:

My proof . . . of the fact of God's coming to me, apart from all the mystery of the way, may be expressed in this simple truth of experience, that in finding Him I found myself: a man's own self, when he has once truly come to himself, is his best experimental proof of God.

Cadet Du Bose brought his senior year to a glorious close: first in his class, first officer of the entire cadet corps, and assistant professor in English. He decided to study for the ministry with Tom Stoney, and for the better part of the next three years, he was majoring in Greek under Dr. Gildersleeve and rounding out his education at the University of Virginia.

The most interesting experiences of the student at Virginia have to do with his relationship with Thomas Dudley, his room-mate. Dudley was as gay and irresponsible as you please. He had a club organized under the motto—*Dulce est desipere in loco*; a line from the Odes of Horace, meaning: "Folly is sweet on occasion." This young man presented himself for confirmation most unexpectedly at a diocesan convention in Virginia. He afterwards entered the ministry, became Bishop of Kentucky, and a Chancellor of the University. He testified that Du Bose had not talked him into this sudden change in his life, but that the quiet reality

of his room-mate's faith had won him in spite of himself. It just 'got' him.

But there was another whom Du Bose won. Or was it that a statement 'got' him, namely: that a certain Miss Nannie Peronneau was "too good to marry"? The young graduate of Virginia had for some time given up his courting ways, until he heard that comment in praise of the beautiful Miss Peronneau, whom plentiful suitors could never suit. Du Bose lost no time in meeting his lovely "Fate", and so earnestly did he conduct his campaign that in April, 1861, there took place simultaneously in Charleston, S. C., two important engagements and two important capitulations. One was the engagement between South Carolina's secessionists and Fort Sumter, with the capitulation of Major Anderson; the other was the capitulation of Miss Nannie and the engagement of Miss Peronneau and Adjutant Du Bose.

The war was on, and Adjutant Du Bose had been summoned from his theological studies in Camden, S. C., to join with all Citadel graduates in the defense of their state. In 1862 he was ordered to Virginia in time to participate in the second Battle of Manassas. When Holcombe's Brigade advanced to the attack through a strip of woods, they walked into the vortex of hottest fire and were almost annihilated. When the firing slackened and the Federal troops began to retire, Adjutant Du Bose found himself "the only field officer of the legion left or able to fight through the battle". With about twelve men behind him, he picked up a flag from a dead flag-bearer and waving it valiantly led on toward the enemy. But suddenly the retreating enemy turned their rifles upon him and fired. He dodged; and turned, he said, "to run like a turkey", but a bullet tore off his coat-tail and grazed his backbone. He was paralyzed for a moment, but luckily the men in blue decided not to take another shot at him where he stood stiff with pain.

It devolved upon the Adjutant to reorganize the shattered regiment—about one hundred men who were able to march—and to command it in the first Maryland invasion. And here we come to another remarkable escape, the most exciting story of all. Let us read it in his own words:

Two weeks after the great battle we made a forced march back from Hagerstown to Boonesboro Gap, to delay the passage across South Mountain of the third great Federal Army

of that year, 1862, now again under General McClellan. General Lee needed the time to unite his two army corps for the approaching great battle of Sharpsburg or Antietam. On the fourteenth of September we barely succeeded in preventing the crossing that day. Our own command had had a fatiguing march of sixteen miles, had climbed the mountain on the north side, had fought and been forced back into the gap, and at about 9 p.m. had sunk dead with sleep in their tracks upon the turnpike. Out of this condition I was aroused by the command to take my most available men and to connect with and extend the picket line on the side of the mountain on which we had fought. This was no easy task on a dark night in the primeval forest, and it must have been toward midnight before it was accomplished. I had just spread my oilcloth at the center of the line and was wondering how I, or any of us, could manage to keep awake, when another order came: it was thought that the mountain above us was abandoned and the enemy withdrawn, and it was necessary to ascertain his movements. I was to ascend to the spot of the afternoon's engagement, discover and report. It was a heavy, and unavoidably, a noisy as well as a dangerous climb; and at the steepest point near the summit I left the men in position to obey any summons and proceeded alone. Upon the plateau on top I lightly and swiftly pushed my reconnoissance to the farthest limit, and seeing and hearing nothing, was in the act of returning satisfied that there was no one there, when it came to me that, to be perfectly certain, I ought to make a detour around the plateau. In this way, it came about that I quite circled a division of troops and walked straight into their lines. Walking back, in half security but very quietly and cautiously, with pistol in hand, I was suddenly brought up with a "Halt!" I could not be sure that it was not some of my own men come to meet me, nor they that I was not one of theirs,—and so it was that we were actually upon each other before we mutually recognized each other as enemies: I had come upon a sentry of two men in the midst of a bivouac, and the woods were sunk in sleep and stillness as if there were no life in them. A man stood before me with the butt of his gun upon the ground. As he jerked up his gun I stepped quite up to him and drew the pistol which I had held cocked under a light cloak. In the act of both doing this and protecting myself from him, my pistol was discharged prematurely, and he, thinking himself shot, cried aloud and precipitated himself upon me. In an instant the mountain top was awake and alive, and I was upon the ground in the midst, in a desperate struggle for escape. The odds were against me, and I landed not many days later a prisoner in Fort Delaware.

Many years later a reference to that night's adventure and excitement appeared in the history of some Northern troops. The friends of a faithful and deserving old soldier from Pennsylvania made my capture the ground for an application for pension, and I was requested to further his claim. After getting from him his side of the story of our momentous encounter, I gave him my testimony and he got his pension. From that time on I occasionally received letters from Cronin expressing the desire to meet me again and saying that he could not die happy without doing so. To my utter surprise, thirty-five years at least after our first meeting, our second took place at Sewanee. He suddenly appeared there, ill and travel-worn, having made the journey across several states to see me again before he died. He said I had come near killing him, and he had come nearer killing me; for when I had twice almost got away, he had at last, being of twice my strength, got me down, and then, with my own pistol, was in the act of shooting, when some mysterious force had held his hand and prevented him. He made me sit down and write for him an account of our two encounters in war and peace, and then as mysteriously made his disappearance.

After two or three months of imprisonment and parole I rejoined my command, then doing service in North Carolina, and just in good time to be dangerously and painfully wounded in an engagement near the town of Kinston. This was late in December. Within those four months death had three times touched me as closely as was consistent with escape; two of my wounds missed vital parts by the merest hair's breadth. On my return to Richmond from prison I was personally informed that I was dead and, on questioning it, was taken to a reading-room and shown my obituary in corroboration.

His scouts, hearing the shot and waiting in vain for his return, had gone back down the mountain and reported their leader killed. In his "Reminiscences" Dr. Du Bose tells us he was saved by the intercession of an officer from being shot as a spy after his capture. He was wearing a bluish top coat he had borrowed!

When Du Bose was wounded at Kinston he was in the act of rallying some troops whose retreat, intended only for a short distance, had almost turned into a panic of flight. His actions had saved the situation, and he was cited for bravery.

A citation for bravery, however, is not the greatest consolation in the world for a desperate wound. But Miss Peronneau was. Dr. Du Bose's full restoration to health was celebrated by his marriage on April 30, 1863, Rev. John H. Elliott, officiating.

Returning to the army, the Adjutant saw service for the remainder of the year from Virginia to Mississippi. Meanwhile, General Kershaw and others, without the young officer's knowledge or consent, procured for him a commission as Chaplain of Kershaw's Brigade, "probably" said Dr. Du Bose, "to preserve what remained of me for service of another kind."

In December he was ordained by Bishop Davis, of South Carolina, and in the beginning of 1864 joined his new command in Greeneville, Tennessee. On his way over the mountains he narrowly escaped an encounter with "bush-whackers", that is, outlaws and deserters of desperate character. So began his ministry in the army, a deacon "with the most brilliant congregations" that he ever had to address.

The close of the war found his brigade in Virginia. The brigade's boast was that it had never slept behind a field of battle.

A time came at last when, through no fault of its own, a glorious victory of the morning was converted into a disgraceful rout in the afternoon, and that night the brigade slept some ten or fifteen miles behind its field of battle. When we finally rested about midnight, I could not sleep; the end of the world was upon me as completely as upon the Romans when the barbarians had overrun them. Never once before had dawned upon me the possibility of final defeat for the Confederate cause. That night it came over me like a shock of death that the Confederacy was beginning to break . . . The actual issue was all upon me that fateful night in which, under the stars, alone upon the planet, without home or country or any earthly interest or object before me, my very world at an end, I redevoted myself wholly and only to God, and to the work and life of His Kingdom whatever and wherever that might be.

In April, 1865, he returned home to find it a picture of the most utter desolation, having lain in the centre of Sherman's march. As rector of the church in Winnsboro he began the work of spiritual and physical rehabilitation of his community.

It may be supposed that he had been unable to study or carry on any progressive thought upon religious matters. But the war experience had made its contribution to his general character, and as Adjutant he had managed to carry with him a little ammunition-box of books, in English, Greek, Latin, and French. "Of these", he wrote in his *Turning Points*, "those which are still with me

are the Greek New Testament, Tennyson's 'Poems', Pascal's 'Thoughts' and Xenophon's 'Memorabilia'."

In 1868 Mr. Du Bose moved his family of three to Abbeville, S. C., where May Du Bose and William Haskell Du Bose joined the household. Abbeville was at that time one of the most cultured and important communities in the state, and the ministry of the Rev. William Porcher Du Bose was so well thought of that he was almost elected bishop of the diocese. The lay vote was particularly enthusiastic for the young man of about thirty-four. Dr. Du Bose in his "Reminiscences" says that this was "one of the most fortunate escapes" of his life!

And then Sewanee elected him Chaplain. The Trustees sent a wire asking for an immediate reply. He wired his acceptance, and told his bishop as soon as he could thereafter. The Bishop endorsed the move, saying that, now that Du Bose was to be Chaplain, his diocese would be all for Sewanee.

This was in the summer of 1871. The following fall and winter the Chaplain canvassed the state for pupils and brought them with him to the Mountain. With the relic of his wife's fortune he built his home and, next to it, a dormitory for his Carolina boys and called it "Palmetto". A sister-in-law of his came to live there as matron. A cousin, Miss Maria Porcher, joined the family and built Magnolia Hall.

That's the kind of Chaplain they had in those days!

The next two or three years were filled with sorrow. Mr. Du Bose lost his wife and a little boy, Samuel. Mrs. Du Bose had never really recovered from the shock and exposure of her experiences in the war. He himself suffered lung trouble, which he fortunately cured by travel and care of himself. It is significant that in his course in Moral Science, required for all seniors in the College, he began with the education of the *body*, then of the mind and spirit.

In 1873 he had assisted Mrs. Yerger and Mrs. Kells of Mississippi in establishing "Fairmount", a school for girls at Monteaule, which furnished many a Southern woman with an education and provided many a Sewanee man with a wife. He himself married Mrs. Yerger in 1878. "Fairmount" was continued by the Du Boses until 1917. So it is that men and women, all over the South and far beyond, have carried into home and vocations and church the abiding influence of Dr. Du Bose.

As for Dr. Du Bose's influence on Sewanee, it has been unequaled.

He did much to set the tone and to outline the principles of her religion and worship. He says:

What I . . . wish to see at Sewanee, as a religious centre, is a high, dignified, and truly typical worship, fully expressive of the reality with which we are dealing and of what we are doing . . . We are least demonstrative when we think the most seriously and feel the most deeply, and least of all in matters the most sacred. At the same time, the highest good manners in the world are those that show themselves in the presence of divine realities.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH will indeed have become wholly derelict to itself when to social and intellectual culture it shall cease to be concerned about adding the saving grace of spiritual culture . . . Its whole intention is to be just the opposite of sectarian, but it can not afford to avoid that accusation by being nothing in particular or everything in general . . . The best it can do in the effort to be Christian without being sectarian is to see to it . . . [that it is] as near as possible to the most central truth of Christianity expressed in the most universal form of worship.

For eleven years he was Chaplain; for thirty-six years he was Professor of Moral Science; and most of the time he was on the Hebdomadal Board, the important governing body of the University. In addition, he conducted a sort of private theological school until St. Luke's got under way and Dr. Hodgson became Dean. He was, therefore, the forerunner of the Seminary, and as both Professor and Dean (Dean from 1893 to 1908, and afterwards Dean *Emeritus*) he was the real maker of the Theological Department. He was already a master of Greek; he also mastered Hebrew and taught in both subjects. When he held classes, the entire group of Theological students met with him. Indeed the school of theology was at Sewanee like the disciple band around their Master on the mountains of Galilee.

I came finally to Sewanee with very little of either technical or practical training and preparation for my duties as: (1) Chaplain, (2) Professor of Ethics, and (3) Developer . . . of a projected Theological Department. . . Many of those under me were older young men whose education had been delayed by the disorganized conditions of war and after. Moreover, the times had bred among them a spirit of individualism and

independence, with more or less fearlessness and lawlessness . . .

I mention these details chiefly to account for the peculiarly close and personal relations which from the beginning grew up between myself and my immediate students, those of my own classes. I was in fact more one of them than one merely over them . . . I claimed nothing, exacted nothing, imposed nothing of or for myself, and they both took more from me and gave me more than I ever asked or deserved. In addition to all this, the isolated location of Sewanee, the high quality of its limited community, the social unity, warmth and charm of the place and the life, conducted in a singular way to the cultivation of personal relations and ties, as well between students and professors as among all others. So from those early days I became in many instances the intimate personal friend of many of my students, their confidant in love, their counsellor in difficulty or trouble, their companion, so far as presence and sympathy could go, in amusement or play.

In his later years he was persuaded to write and to travel. He became a world figure in the realm of philosophy and religion. Lord Balfour placed his *Soteriology* on a shelf by itself, saying that it was unique, a work far ahead of its time. Another on the other side (Bishop Moorhouse) said: "Here in these books of Du Bose we have a positive sunburst from the West." The great Dr. Sanday, of England, called Dr. Du Bose "the wisest Anglican writer . . . on both sides of the Atlantic". Dr. J. O. F. Murray, Cambridge, England, came to Sewanee in 1924 and lectured on Dr. Du Bose. His book is entitled *Du Bose, a Prophet of Unity*.

Dr. Du Bose, however, had none of the airs of a world figure. He was so unassuming, so much at home in everyone's company, that everyone was at home with him, children and mountaineers and all our colored brethren. A friend said to him in sudden exclamation over something he had written, "Doctor, you are a great man!" And the Doctor, in a naive and puzzled sort of way, said, "Why do you say that? No,—no,—I am not great." Only those who knew him as the writer did can appreciate how he said it. So utterly oblivious was he of his own greatness that we were scarcely aware of it ourselves. We stood not in awe of him, but we loved him and loved God for him. And yet, so vigorous was his thought, so pioneering and so daring, that at times he had to do his thinking in an atmosphere not altogether sympathetic and ready to understand.

With all his gentleness, the Chaplain had a way with him that met with wholesome respect. One day in Chapel, when a mischievous movement had been disturbing the student body, the Chaplain paused in the service and said in so many words: "I have in my hand a list of twelve men who have been leaders in this disturbance. They can control the whole situation immediately if they will. If they will not, the first name here will be stricken from the rolls of the University; and so on, until the matter is settled." The student body hardly dared to move from their seats after the "Amen". No one heard whose names were listed, but the matter was settled in a hurry! How mysterious the threat, yet how complimentary!

When Dr. Du Bose first came to the University, the student body was in a rather chaotic state, and he was intrusted with organizing the Order of Gownsmen to preserve standards and ideals among the students, and to make of them a more self-governing body. The Order includes all Juniors and Seniors and graduate students in good standing.

The magnetism and sincerity of his personality is illustrated by the story of his meeting with Miss Helen Keller. It was at a reception, and the blind hostess had many hands to shake, but when she felt the hand of Dr. Du Bose, she impulsively ran her fingers lightly over his small straight stature and seemed to see through them his face, and indeed his very soul. Then she drew him quickly to her and kissed him as though she had discovered her father.

His theology is often hard to understand, but he could put his profoundest thought in such simple words as these to a boy: "I hope that God *and you* will make you a good boy and a great man." A favorite illustration, which he describes as a "life-moment", was the story of Lieutenant Ninkum Poop. Poop was a soldier with high and noble ideals and sentiments, dreams of self-sacrifice, and then of honor and glory. But at the seat of war his actions evinced the pusillanimity of the little-souled, the coward and poltroon. From that time on *Reality* became Du Bose's watchword. Life was not really life, Dr. Du Bose was wont to say, until translated into life. He emphasized the reality of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and insisted upon the incarnation

by Christians of His life and spirit, and upon a true correspondence between one's living and believing.

* * * *

If it could be said in a word what Dr. Du Bose has meant to Sewanee, it would seem to be this: He gave reality to her spirit; he incarnated her being; he translated her idealism into actuality. He would lead Sewanee from Ninkum Poopish sentimentality and have her speak only in terms of life. By his work and life he has more than any one else articulated Sewanee to the world. He has been called a prophet,—God's Prophet, and Sewanee's.

by Herbert Edward Mierow

ESCAPE

White surges thunder on the silver shore,
Faint night-winds whisper o'er the violet sea,
Yonder the moon in silent beauty walks
Along a starry pathway of the night.

Thou silver fragment of eternity,
Serene and fair among the lesser stars,
I gaze at thee and lo, there die away
The din and turmoil of this feverish life—
I feel the calmness of the infinite.

by Charles Frederick Harrold

RUSKIN'S ÆSTHETIC

THE VICTORIAN MORALITY OF ART: An Analysis of Ruskin's Aesthetic. By Henry Ladd. New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith. Pp. xi, 418. \$3.00.

If Ruskin means little to the common reader to-day, the cause, no doubt, is a quality mentioned in one of Dr. Ladd's concluding chapters. "Ruskin", he says, "is of all the Victorian prophets the most capricious because his work is the most representative of the variety of Victorian interests. He is the apotheosis of contradiction in the period." This want of consistency in Ruskin's theories repels the twentieth century, which aspires to a belief in the universal efficacy of reason and science. It is thus highly profitable to turn to a new analysis of Ruskin's aesthetic, and to see wherein his doctrines are historically comprehensible and, at the same time, contributory to present and future developments in the criticism of art. "Ruskin's theory remains contradictory but historically important because of the unsettled questions which it stimulates." This, in short, is the justification for the present study, an admirable example of indefatigable analysis and careful statement.

The author's thesis is that Ruskin never reconciled the warring elements out of which he constructed an aesthetic which was to be at once a law of art, of ethics, of social salvation, and of religious experience. Absorbing the intellectual atmosphere about him—with its newly awakened love of the picturesque, of a "scientific" study of rocks and plants as the revelation of God's presence in the world,—Ruskin unwarily founded his theory of art on elements drawn eclectically from Aristotle, Locke, Hooker, and the Bible. Like Alison, he grounds the sense of beauty on sense perception and the association of ideas, then "thrusts the entire experience of the beautiful under what in his day was psychologically described as the 'Moral Faculty'." As a child of his age, he naturally believed that the meanest item of nature could, for the right observer, lead to "thoughts that lie too deep for tears". In

line with current psychological doctrines, he assumed that "instinct, whose laws are the fabric of our moral life", was the gift of the Creator, and that to analyse our reactions to beauty, together with the actual facts of nature, would be to state at once the essence of art and its relation to the realm of ethical values. That such an assumption, with all the wealth of rhetoric which Ruskin devoted to it, should become highly popular, was natural and inevitable. A new public had arisen; "by 1843 the time was ripe for a new dogmatism; . . . a large number of people [were] ready to listen to any message that could sanction the successful progress" of the newly rich middle class, which wanted something more vital than the dead formulas of eighteenth century aesthetics, something which would tell them what to admire, which would, in short, rationalize their incipient interest in nature, their discovery of the arts, and their sturdily Hebraic religious convictions. "It is for this very reason", declares the author, "that Ruskin's theory of beauty carried such popular appeal. The elasticity of what he called moral emotion, the comprehensive scope he found for beauty, brought a safe and dignified justification to a public that was eager for its scenes of sentiment, its biblical or medieval fancies, its true and beautiful and 'noble' landscapes." The fundamental—and fatal—inconsistencies underlying the point of view thus implied are ably shown by the author to be explanation of the dissonance and unhappiness not only of Ruskin but also of the age, of which he was, in many ways, the symbol.

Space does not permit a detailed statement of the conclusions of Dr. Ladd's study. It is enough, perhaps, to say that we have here a work which has every appearance of being an untiring and scholarly analysis. It richly supplies the historical background of Ruskin's work, clarifies and re-states Ruskin's theory of art (a task deserving our gratitude, in the light of all the involved and capricious theorizing in the six volumes of *Modern Painters*), relates Ruskin's doctrines with current movements of thought and with their logical antecedents, traces Ruskin's changes in thought and conviction (from early parental piety, through the skeptical middle years, to the later mystical period), and indicates briefly Ruskin's significance for the twentieth century. There are stimulating correlations between some of Ruskin's ideas and those of

Tolstoy, Vernon, Croce, Dewey, and Ducasse. There is also the very important observation that Ruskin's use of the word *moral* need not necessarily repel the twentieth century art lover. "Ruskin's 'moral' was very close, in its theoretical context, to our term 'emotional'. To-day one finds the terms *sensitive, fine, civilized* used in precisely the context with the term *nature* that Ruskin was wont to use 'noble' or 'moral'." Indeed, it is clearly evident now that "Ruskin's trouble lay not in the confusion of aesthetics with morals but of one sort of morality with another." The great crack in all of Ruskin's art theory—and in much of his social and ethical doctrine—is caused by the insuperable difficulties to be encountered in attempting, as he did, to erect an idealistic, if not a Hebraic, aesthetic on the basis of Lockian empiricism. "His ethical views are the extensions of naturalistic aesthetics as well as naturalistic morals and theology . . . At one moment he is quoting Richard Hooker, at another pleased with Rousseau, or referring to Plato . . . or Christianizing Aristotle or John Locke . . . and simultaneously he is founding beauty on sensual [sensuous] pleasure, admitting the relativity of taste, and dedicating art to the glory of a God about whom he admitted he knew little." On the other hand, we leave Ruskin, at the end of the present study, with a feeling that he is not wholly irrelevant to the problem of art to-day. If present-day artists scorn Ruskinism, the reason is that their work, "even more than Victorian painting and criticism, [is] the expression of moral confusion" and the indication of "ethical bankruptcy". They remind us that Ruskin is primarily the critic who, in Dr. Ladd's phrase, found in art an ultimate social value, and who regarded art itself as a good life, as indeed the *way* to life rather than as a weary or timid escape from it.

by William S. Knickerbocker

STUNNING STEIN

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOKLAS. By Gertrude Stein. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Company. 1933.

Neither knew or rather neither had read or was about to read or maybe perchance if compelled to read by say-so of me or you or he or she could read the book itself but Rip after cleaving the roasted broilers mentioned at Greendays Gertrude Toklas Stein B. Toklas. Neither knew yet there were five of us perhaps only four since Charles is only eleven going on twelve or rather there was only one of us since the rest of us were older than eleven going on twelve and Charles therefore was only able to read the Autobiography of Toklas B. Gertrude but he neither had read or maybe if compelled perchance maybe could read the book though he was if not under then over Captains Courageous by Eric Kelly of Dartmouth. Dr. Knickerbocker alone was competent for genius he is none and no power for humbug having no awe for Branchusi, Epstein, Scott Fitzgerald whatever no genius or hero himself never having brains or viscera to say what he wants to say no not *Nil Admirari* nor *nolo episcopari* not even aut Caesar aut Nullus but. Rip possessed *Tender Buttons* in his also *Sweet Singer of Michigan* Library of course Frances was too sensible to perceive the genius of Stein and maybe too engrossed in Galsworthy's *Candlebra* anyway Lilian smelt of Delphinium just cut in her garden or was it nasturtiums? Dr. Knickerbocker himself immolated in the pouring rain on Labor Day sitting at dinner at Greendays never having read Gertrude Stein and though capable never intended to except excerpts of Alice in Atlantic hence the only one competent to comment because he is the only one living who practices what Toklas Stein preaches never to have an idea because literature is Gertrude Stein and Gertrude means something but doesn't say it but leaves critics like William Troy in the Nation say "her non-

associational prose became one of the greatest single influences on the prose of her time."

Lilian said what she said was very non-Stein: it is easy to write like that meaning only too meaningful and so very un-Steinian unsimian that "anyone can write like Stein" because writing like that doesn't need much understeining. Much more Steining stunning was the old gag. Our age leans to Stein or is it Beer with too much stern Stein in Epstein Eisenstein Einstein or just plain stein. Are we too much steined stoned stunned? "Non-associational prose". O pish-tosh. Like water which isn't wet. "One of the greatest single influences on the prose of her time". O William of Troy where is your sister Helen? O Cluett Peabody! O collars and cuffs! The best way to read *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* by Gertrude Stein is not to read it though buy it. Publishers must live. Full of backgammon and spinach. But Charles aged eleven going on twelve said a mouthful when he said with the wisdom of serpents and harmlessness of doves Gertrude Stein is like *The Emperor's Clothes*.

by Maurice Halperin

TOWARD A NEW RENAISSANCE

L'HOMME MODERNE. By Fortunat Strowski. Paris, Grasset, 12 francs.

Fortunat Strowski occupies somewhat the same position in the intellectual life of contemporary France as Alain. A well known young novelist recently declared that if a study were undertaken to examine the influence of Alain in the realm of French thought and letters, it would undoubtedly reveal that there is scarcely a writer or thinker forty years old or less in France who does not owe a debt to this modest teacher of philosophy in one of the secondary schools in Paris. One could say as much for M. Strowski.

Professor of literature at the Sorbonne, he has helped fashion the literary elite of France for many years. As a scholar, he has distinguished himself above all for his exhaustive studies on Montaigne, Saint François de Sales and Pascal, and for his judicious interpretations of their thought. Specialization in the religious and philosophical literature of the seventeenth century did not restrict his interests to the "grand siècle". His manual of nineteenth and twentieth century French literature is a model of scholarly achievement, critical judgment, and prose style. He still is a regular contributor of reviews and articles on current letters and the drama to the Paris press. The chair of contemporary French literature which he to-day holds at the Sorbonne was especially created for him. That M. Strowski has so profoundly influenced all who have come into contact with him is a tribute to his great personal charm as well as to his genuinely humanistic approach to literature.

Therein lies one of the great differences between the rôle that the French university plays in the field of letters and that of our American universities. With rare exceptions, our best critics are not to be found in the universities. It is different in France. Our American departments of literature, with their insistence on literary history as an end in itself and not a means toward something more important, more vital, have divorced scholarship from interpretation and evaluation, from life itself. The result is that these departments, when they are not frankly philological or linguistic institutes, are filled with dull pedants who stew about aimlessly in the great mass of "literary" facts and dates that they have collected. It is true that one finds such pedants in France, too, but they do not predominate, they do not set the standards, they do not perpetuate themselves. Literary scholarship in the French university—and this applies to M. Strowski—is not confined to sterile erudition; it is sensitive to philosophical and aesthetic value, it encourages and moulds literary criticism, its function in the literary life of the nation is a vital one.

It is natural that M. Strowski, steeped in the wisdom of Montaigne and Pascal, should in these anxious days turn to "Modern Man" as the subject of his book. Written with the buoyant grace, the virile elegance, and the clarity of thought and expression that have always characterized his writings, (one would say that it is a young man writing, though the old master is now

close to seventy), *L'Homme Moderne* begins and ends on a note of optimism. It is perhaps true that there is less incentive for optimism to-day than a year ago when the book came out, but those who know M. Strowski remember that he was one of the first to greet the post-war confusion in culture as the sign of a new Renaissance. Considered in its deeper and less immediate aspects—and this is M. Strowski's point of view—it may well be a glorious re-birth that awaits occidental culture rather than the total darkness that Spengler predicts. What to M. Strowski is more important, more significant than the obvious and violently purgative political revolution that we dread so much, is what he calls "the profound or invisible revolution", that is to say, those far reaching changes in art, science, philosophy that affect not only our way of living, but our way of thinking. Furthermore, it is precisely this "invisible revolution", whose progress may be so slow that when it ends we shall have forgotten its beginnings, which we need to face and understand in order to have confidence in the future. This is what M. Strowski sets out to do in *L'Homme Moderne*, a book which is neither a detailed study nor an exhaustive treatise but a long essay.

"Man has now only himself to fear" is the conclusion to which M. Strowski comes in the first part of his essay, a conclusion which explains one of the fundamental bases of the revolution through which we are passing. What he means is that up to now we have had to contend with nature in our efforts to build civilization, not only in the form of flood and famine but in the subjugation of human muscle without which nothing could be accomplished. It is only to-day, when we are passing from the era of muscle-driven machinery (even the steam engine requires coal that must be extracted from the earth by human muscle) to the stage of power-machinery where the human hand is scarcely necessary (electrical energy generated by falling water), that nature is definitely harnessed. Henceforth, we have only ourselves to blame for our misfortunes; henceforth, we can direct our own destinies.

With this in mind, M. Strowski takes up what he aptly terms the "new aesthetics of velocity". The fact that we now travel at high speeds not only means that we have conquered terrestrial distance, but also that we are beginning to see objects in a state of constant motion. In other words, we are passing from the age of im-

mobility to the age of mobility, a change so revolutionary that it is affecting our every mode of life. However, since this is a revolution of our own making, the new aesthetics based on speed should not be difficult to accept, unless we think of art in terms of an Absolute. M. Strowski describes some of the changes it has already effected, from interior decorating and stage setting to the acceptance of the straight line in architecture. "To-day", he writes, "our newly acquired speed has revealed the beauty of the straight line, which has become the companion of our travels and excursions. The straight line appears to us as the goal toward which all things tend. It signifies soaring flight and speed, it symbolizes the liberation of energy and the victory of man over space." This reveals just one aspect of the metamorphosis in art due to man's conquest of distance. How this fundamental change from "immobility to mobility" will affect the future development of the arts remains to be seen, but the essential facts, in the words of M. Strowski, are: (1) "modern speed has had the same effect on art as that of a torrential flood sweeping over soft earth and carrying away grass, rolling pebbles, sand and mud, to bring out finally in bold relief the sharp edges of indestructible rock and reveal the simple lines of reality;" (2) "speed is a product of man; it is through his efforts that it has come into his life. It is thus for man to perceive this form of reality with more or less clarity and to change the face of the earth".

M. Strowski's analysis of the new aesthetics, which we have but feebly outlined, can nevertheless serve to illustrate his approach to the problems that confront Modern Man in other realms. Briefly, we may say that he believes our ugly industrial civilization is merely the bridge to a future civilization in which man will not return to the primitive labor and happiness of pre-industrial days, an epoch which some of our romantic agrarians pine for, but one in which the human muscle will at last be free from bondage. True, M. Strowski has nothing to say concerning the immediate political and economical transformations that are necessary if we are at all to survive this industrial stage of our history, but that is not his purpose in this essay. These matters, he would say, perched on his Olympian peak, belong to "the superficial or obvious revolution"; in *L'Homme Moderne* he is concerned with "the profound or invisible revolution", and for him, the latter leads to a new

freedom and a new cultural synthesis which will be truly humanistic. To quote him for the last time: "In this wise we may say that the new aspect of things, as well as the things in themselves, are subjected to the will of Modern Man, who can, if he will, bring order, truth and proportion out of them."

by George E. De Mille

SIDNEY LANIER

SIDNEY LANIER: a Biographical and Critical Study. By Aubrey Harrison Starke. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1933. Pp. 525.

Mr Starke deserves the thanks of all lovers of American Literature for having done this work. The amount of available published material on Lanier has been shockingly out of proportion with his importance in the literature of our country. Until this volume appeared, we had only the rhapsodic memoir of William Hayes Ward, the life, excellent, but far too brief, by Professor Mims, and one slight volume of letters. This defect Mr. Starke has amply remedied. The book is a first-rate piece of original research, incorporating a large number of unpublished letters, and resurrecting from the files of old periodicals poems hitherto unknown.

But it is far more than a mere compendium of facts about Lanier. Mr. Starke has shown a great deal of the talent of the true biographer in building up a picture of the society in which Lanier lived, and in interpreting for us that ardent, emotional, yet thoroughly masculine nature; that strange compound of quivering sensitiveness and hard, clear intellectuality, that make up perhaps the most appealing personality in the whole field of American letters. To compare, as Mr. Starke has done, Lanier with Keats and with Francis of Assisi, was a stroke of genuine

insight—the kind of insight that seldom goes with the meticulous care in detail that this volume indicates.

There is no sense in picking minor flaws in a work of this kind. But there is one error that runs all through the book. For all his love for Lanier the man, I do not think Mr. Starke has arrived at a final and true estimate of Lanier the poet. He thinks, for instance, that Lanier's great interest in science weakened his poetry. Precisely the opposite seems to me the truth. Given Lanier's early romantic sentimentalism, given his extravagant love for word-music, it was just some such stiffening as that given by science that was needed to make his poetry something more than a collection of luscious words. Lanier is one of the greatest of nature poets, one who should be most acceptable to modern readers, because, writing after Darwin, he brings into poetry some of the fundamental attitudes toward nature that any thinking man, after Darwin, must assume. Again it seems to me that Mr. Starke makes a fundamental error when he labels Lanier "pantheist". One of Lanier's great virtues is that, with all his love for nature, with all his sense of positive rapture in the presence of nature, he always holds himself distinct from nature, always asserts his humanity—or, if one likes, his divinity. One wonders, indeed, that the Humanists, with their desire to get man out of nature, have not made more of such a poem as *The Cloud*—one of the finest expressions in all poetry of philosophic dualism. Nor, it seems to me, does Mr. Starke make enough of Lanier's great distinction—that alone among all the American poets of his age—Whitman of course excepted—he refused to make poetry a walled-in garden of refuge from life, but looked life, with all its ugliness and problems squarely in the face, and made poetry of what he saw there. And finally, when one finds our biographer cavilling at such a poem as *A Song of Eternity in Time*—surely one of the finest lyrics in American literature—one can only shrug one's shoulders in wonder.

But in spite of such defects—and that they are defects is, of course, a matter of opinion—Mr. Starke has done well by his subject, and all lovers of Lanier and of Lanier's reputation will feel grateful to him. The biographical side of the matter is done. What we now need is some Matthew Arnold, with all of Arnold's persuasiveness and authority, to sum up in an essay the poetic achievement of the man; and were this rightly done, our histories

of American literature would no longer pass him over with a perfunctory mention, but put him where he belongs—second only to Whitman in the catalogue of American poets.

by *Edward Niles Hooker*

ELEPHANTIASIS

TITANS OF LITERATURE. By Burton Rascoe. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1932. \$3.75.

In writing the *Titans* Mr. Rascoe would seem to have had his tongue well in his cheek. It is pleasant reading, it was written with gusto, and it must have been conceived as an amiable sort of joke upon his readers. Otherwise, in view of its being addressed partly to scholars, of its patronizing air toward such a man as Gilbert Murray, and of its eccentricities, it could scarcely escape being considered both slightly presumptuous and slightly impertinent. Unfortunately, the reviewers have taken it seriously, thus missing the whole point. Just because Hugh Walpole called the author "one of the three American critics who have the most influence upon the literature of the time", there is no reason why Mr. Rascoe could not scramble biography and literary criticism into a delightful absurdity if he wanted to.

Of course Mr. Rascoe is being funny; the essay on Milton is one of the most waggish things that have appeared in many a day. To begin with, he charges with assumed solemnity that Milton stole material for *Paradise Lost* from an Italian writer, Salandra, and that this plagiarism was made known in English only in recent years by Bliss Perry and Douglas; the fact is that this business was discussed in an English magazine over eighty years ago, and has been by common consent dismissed as unimportant. Still more amusing is Mr. Rascoe's quaint change in the name of Sal-

andra's work: it was really called *Adama Caduto* (suggesting that it deals with the Fall of Adam), whereas Mr. Rascoe calls it *Adam Canuto* (which may be translated "Old Man Adam"—probably derived from a nursery rhyme or a negro spiritual). And to make sure that you get the point Mr. Rascoe repeats *Adam Canuto* at least four times; it can't be inadvertent because Mr. Rascoe is a Dante scholar and knows his Italian. He also tells you that Milton wrote *The Reason of Church Government* as an attack upon *Catholic* prelates; nothing could be more hilarious.

But these are not his only sallies. His theory that Shakespeare was himself near to insanity when he wrote *Lear* is an ingenious piece of nonsense; carrying out the principle, he might have said that Shakespeare was nearly a misanthrope when he created *Timon*, and had near a mother-fixation when he created *Hamlet*. The assertions that critical attacks were responsible for breaking the spirit of Keats, and that Milton conceived his pamphlet on divorce only because of his domestic troubles, have their claims as humor. When Mr. Rascoe describes Shelley, the image is so entertainingly unlike the poet who wrote *Alastor* and the *Defense of Poetry* that we should be churlish not to give a responsive chuckle.

It must be confessed, however, that so high a level of humor is not always maintained; several of the essays are, though light and pleasant reading, merely serious and commonplace . . . The essay on Moore misses many opportunities for wit by failing to make any reference to most of the important novels, such as *Esther*, *Waters*, *A Drama in Muslin*, *The Lake*, *Héloïse and Abélard*, and *Ulick and Soracha*. But Mr. Rascoe compensates for these plateaus when in the peak of his sly mischievousness he proclaims that we could easily do without most of Chaucer (including *Troilus*), that *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are sophomoric compositions, and that Dante has the value of a telephone directory. So charmingly absurd! What a pity that most readers will insist on taking Mr. Rascoe seriously. Heaven help them.

by James D. Hart

ILLUSION

THE DECADE OF ILLUSION. By Maurice Sachs. Knopf, N. Y. 1933. \$3.50.

"Which of us cannot recall to mind some royal princess of limited intelligence who let herself be carried off by a footman, and then, ten years later, tried to get back to society . . . have we not found her spontaneously adopting the language of the old bores, and, when we referred to some duchess who was at the height of fashion, heard her say: 'She came to see me only yesterday,' or 'I live a very quiet life.' So that it is superfluous to make a study of manners, since we can deduce them from psychological laws".—*Within A Budding Grove*.

The title of Mr. Sachs' book leads us to expect something very different from that which we find, we expect a panorama of a decade and instead we find ourselves holding a group of hasty snapshots totally unrelated to a common background; his minute biographies no more constituting the portrait of a decade than Saurat's little stipples of paint would constitute a picture if each one were placed on a separate shred of canvas. There has been neither selection nor harmony, and no inter-relation, each fragment stands out by itself with nothing upon which to hang; we are told over and over again that these people lived in Paris, in a decade which had a central unity and which is now past, but we have to take the author's word for it, he proves the fact no more than the list of names in a telephone directory prove the character of a city. We have a substantial card catalogue of the people whom the author has known at one time or another but we rarely receive characterizations of them and never are they tied up to the background in which they lived. There is an eleven-page index for this two hundred and fifty page book, an index which contains approximately seven hundred and seventy names, or an average of three new persons for every page of text; they pass by in parade, our attention is drawn to a few because they wear brighter uniforms or beat louder drums, but in general the seven hundred and seventy march by, their eccentricities or genius so similar that they stand out no more than do the common privates in a regimental

parade. The figures in Mr. Sachs' account are all introduced in the same fashion, first a description of the home, then a quick sketch of the owner, one forming a complement to the other, a good word for the owner's art and then on to the next; the whole reminding us of nothing so much as a shooting gallery in which cardboard pigeon follows cardboard pigeon on an endless rotary belt; we come to know just how much time will be given us to draw a bead on one pigeon before the next appears. Twice in the second part of the book, the part devoted to magicians as opposed to the slippery conjurers, who rotated so swiftly that we were unable to take aim; we almost obtain a clear sight, and Cocteau and Max Jacob become real people, although we can hardly believe it after the long line of imitation pigeons which has been passing by ceaselessly. Of these two Cocteau is the more real and through the adorations of the youths for this young master we almost find a piece of the background which should lie behind the whole work. The description of the idolatry of these youths and the way in which they followed his example of conversion to the Catholic Church reminds one of what Gautier said about the opening of deVigny's "Chatterton"—"you could almost hear in the night the crack of solitary pistols." But having twice nearly grasped his subject Mr. Sachs again loses it in his chapter on Picasso, who stands a solitary figure unrelated to the decade of illusion, and differing only from Chirico, Modigliani and a dozen others by the fact that he receives better critical attention. The whole book fails to gather up its figures and relate them to the atmosphere of their background, just as much as Margaret Anderson achieved that feat in "My Thirty Years War", and anyone who wishes a picture of a period which Mr. Sachs has at least aptly named, will turn instead to Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises" or sections of "1919", and feels himself rewarded at last.

by Frances Wentworth Knickerbocker

A VICTORIAN MEDLEY

THE GREAT VICTORIANS. Edited by H. J. and Hugh Massingham. New York. Doubleday, Doran and Co. 1932.

Victorian. The epithet, not long ago a term of abuse, is rapidly becoming a word to conjure with. In the rising tide of Victorian fashions and furniture, we are drawn closer to the Victorian scene.

The summing-up of one generation by another is the task attempted in each of the books before us. The task of re-estimating some forty Victorians, great or near-great, proved too vast for the Massinghams alone, so they sought the aid of a representative company of moderns. The kaleidoscopic effect of such diversity of opinion is fatal to unity of impression. A fact stated on one page is contradicted on another. We leap dizzily from the Communism of Mr. J. Middleton Murry to the Catholicism of Father d'Arcy; from Rebecca West's subtle analysis of Charlotte Brontë's torn spirit to Charles Morgan's divination of Emily's mystic vision. The result is not a modern view of the Victorians but a medley of views, at once enlivening and confusing.

The editors' introduction strikes a keynote that somewhat harmonizes the medley. The Victorian Age (or rather, two ages) was not a stagnation but a series of explorations. We are still settling the realms where they pioneered. But the predominant social aspect, the triumph of the middle-class enriched by the Industrial Revolution, had serious consequences for art: it broke down the old literary tradition and it divorced art from the ugliness of competitive society. This theme of the breakdown of the Romantic Movement and the widening breach between art and life is reiterated and illustrated in the studies of Pater, Rossetti, and Swinburne; the counter-movement, the artist's search for a social order in which art can live again, in those on Ruskin and Morris.

For the great error of modern criticism is to treat the Victorian Age as if it were single or simple. Of this error Mr. W. J. Turner's

scornful view or Swinburne is a notable instance, with its assertion that the principle of Victorianism is that of satisfaction attained through inhibitions. The editors reject this error when they insist, as does the author of the study of FitzGerald, that revolt was as characteristic of the age as complacency. Indeed it was this very conflict of ideals that conditioned the work of some of the chief Victorians.

It is a pity that this theme of the conflict of ideals is not so carried out as to unify the book. It would have illuminated the studies of Arnold (amiably but ineffectively admired by Edmund Blunden), and of Tennyson (unamiably and ineffectively dissected by John Collier). On the whole, however, there is a notable absence of the superior ironic tone of the Strachey-imitators. The great Victorians are neither belittled nor derided. That Chesterton on Dickens, Walpole on Trollope, will abound with genial discernment, goes without saying. Swinnerton's "Thackeray", Tomlinson's "Stevenson", Miss Sackville-West's "George Eliot", are evidences that criticism can be keen without being contemptuous. Mr. Housman can portray Florence Nightingale almost as vividly as Strachey, yet not cruelly.

There is also a refreshing lack of the pathological probing of which the Victorians have been victims. Freud is sparingly invoked, and it is even suggested that Thackeray and Trollope, who would have pooh-poohed Freud, may have been right in declining to tell all they knew of life! From the moderns we expect appreciation of Hardy, but we had hardly hoped for such sane re-estimations of Meredith and Browning.

Some of the outstanding portraits are those of statesmen. Harold Nicolson's "Palmerston" is a brilliant critique of the degradation of popular diplomacy; Laski's "Peel" is a discerning estimate of the "first of modern statesmen". If Lord Ponsonby finds little that is new to say of Gladstone, he does discard flippancy and reaffirm that greatness of character stressed by Morley. A. A. Baumann treats Disraeli as the symbol of Toryism, and Hugh Massingham finds Lord Salisbury so colorless that we wish he had chosen the vivid Chamberlain. Perhaps the finest re-estimate is J. L. Hammond's study of Cobden's prophetic sense of the unity of civilization.

The philosophers are almost lacking. The choice of F. H. Brad-

ley, the Neo-Hegelian, as the sole representative, makes even more lamentable the omission of John Stuart Mill's place in philosophy (Sir Arthur Salter treats him only as an economist). For without a knowledge of Mill's rôle as the mediator of empiricism, neither the earlier Radicalism of the age nor the later revival of Idealism can be understood.

The scientists fare somewhat better. The "Darwin" summarizes the theory but omits the personality. The "Samuel Butler" indicates the variety of speculations of that amazing amateur of science. But the most challenging essay in the book is H. J. Massingham's "Huxley". Huxley, he maintains, made of the new religion of scientific method not simply a means of liberation from the old dogmas, but the basis of a new dogma. His *Evolution and Ethics* pictured a hostile universe, and his notion that man is instinctively a fighting animal "has done incalculable mischief."

Here is a Victorian protest chastised as if it were a complacency! Without summoning all the evidence, one may submit that Huxley, the firm believer in "the absolute justice of the system of things," was neither the author of that distortion of Darwinism, the gospel of force, nor the spiritual father of Bernhardt and Treitschke.

With all allowances made, this book is the record of a "God's plenty of creative genius."

by *Carroll Fenton Lane*

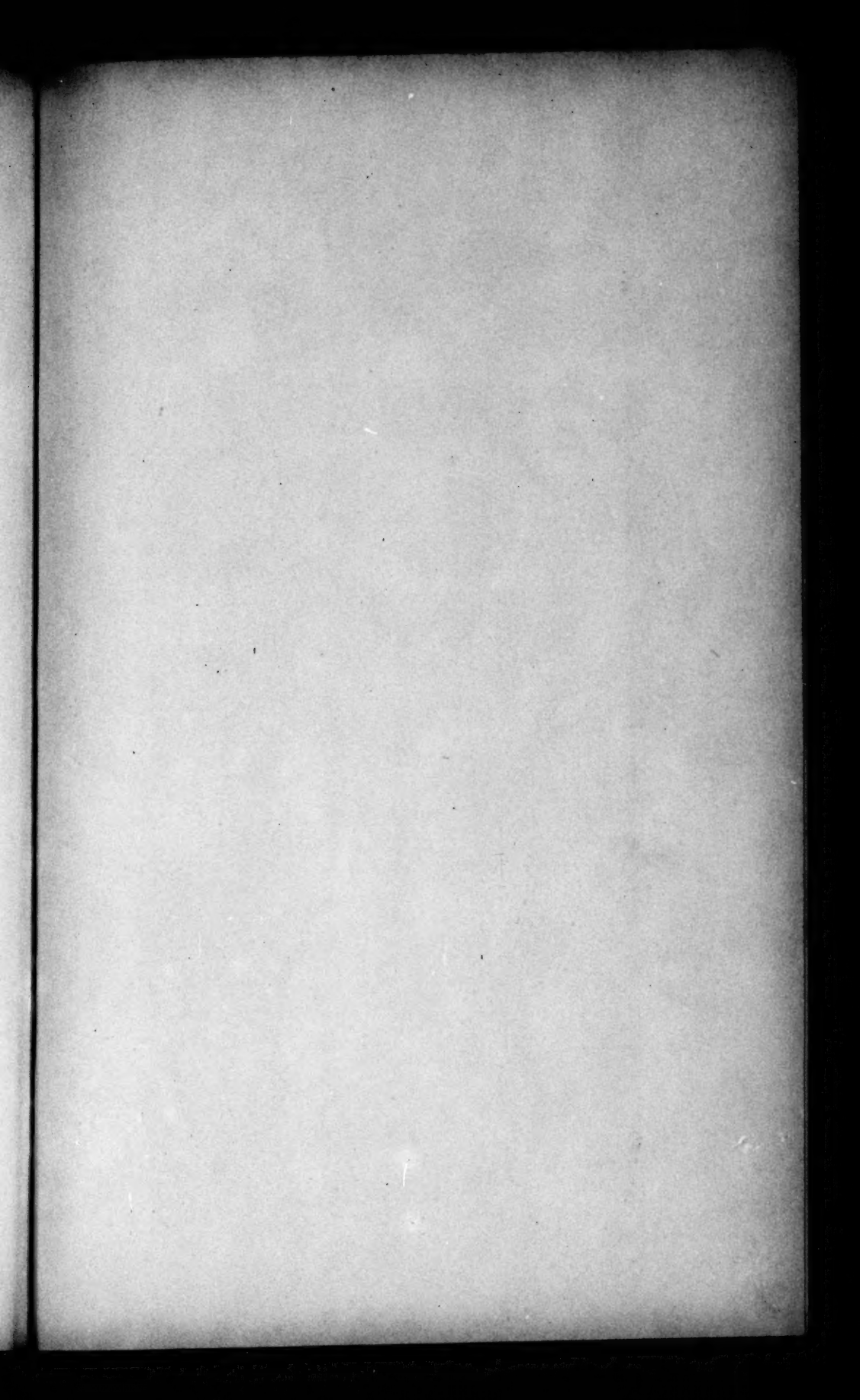
FLAMING ARROW

FLAMING ARROW'S PEOPLE, by an Acoma Indian. New York: Duffield and Green, 1932. 158 pp., \$2.50.

Secluded upon their almost invincible mesa, in the midst of a southwestern desert, the Acoma Indians have effectively resisted the destructive efforts of invading Spaniards, Mexicans, and even Americans. True, they have paid tribute to mailed conquerors,

have accepted some of the trader's goods, and have opened their town to the gaping tourist—whom they charge five dollars if he carries a camera. But they have not forsaken sacred songs for the radio, nor dances for the jiggling of a second-hand flivver; nor do they exhibit their ceremonies to bus loads of white men. For them, there still is a thrill in the mysteries of ancient religion, a pleasure in simple games of their fathers, and a precious dignity in isolation.

Flaming Arrow is a native of the pueblo of Acoma—an "educated Indian" who had returned willingly and with pride to the home of his ancestors and the society of his people. In simple, yet impressive language, he records the daily life of these dwellers in his home, which is the oldest continuously inhabited city within the borders of the United States. His birth in an ancient, yet remodeled house; the ceremonies and diversions of his childhood and youth; the means by which he and his neighbors maintain existence in a harsh and often hostile environment,—these are the substance of a tale and embodies the author's own life and aspirations. In an age whose achievements are becoming threats, in which ritual is merely the slave of business or the bulwark of a system which no one really loves, yet which all fear to abandon, this simple story of hunts, dances and ceremonies offers a refreshing reminder that men may have joy without sacrifice of strength. The simplicity of its message is emphasized by a series of beautifully printed paintings, in which Flaming Arrow presents dancers of his people in ceremonies which summarize the essentials of their culture. Like the text, they possess force and earnestness, which are the most valuable attributes of the primitive outlook—and which probably are the qualities which our own mechanized culture must recapture if it is to retain world leadership. *Flaming Arrow's People* offers inspiration as well as entertainment and first-hand information.





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